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Talking Points 2

Religious education

Religious education in the curriculum 4
A. G. Loosemore

Religion and moral education 10
J. Ungoed-Thomas

Religious education in a multicultural society 13
Rabbi Hugo Gryn

The disadvantaged mind and the need to activate it 16
J. K. Brierley

The education and training of teachers 23
Frank Makin

Training teachers in assessment techniques 28
H. G. Macintosh

When young people start work 34
Clive Booth

International education 43

Basic education statistics 44

Book reviews 45

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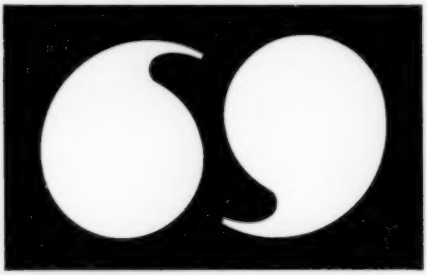

Talking Points

Holier than thou?

This country has a history, a language, and a set of institutions that are deeply rooted in the Christian tradition, and although there has been over the years a steady decline in Christian observance (notably in church attendance), most people still profess a belief in God. Exactly what form that belief takes, or what kind of a god they profess to believe in, is likely to be more difficult to establish. They will be most aware of the religious aspects of their lives at marriage, at christenings, and at funerals. Even agnostics and atheists often end up with a Christian burial because to have no ceremony at all seems cavalier but secular funerals are not always easy to arrange.

Most parents too, it seems, even when they themselves are indifferent to religion, feel that their children ought to have some kind of religious education at school, but religious education is one of the subjects they, unless they are committed Christians, are least likely to enquire about. Again, agnostics and atheists are likely to be concerned about what is taught in the religious education class, not because they want their children to remain uncontaminated by contact with Christian doctrine but because they want to ensure that the teaching is not narrowly denominational and that the syllabus takes in the beliefs and practices of other world religions and the beliefs and practices of those who have no religion at all.

It would be a tough-minded atheist, however, who exercised his right to withdraw his children from the RE class, thus making them 'different' from their peers. It is more likely to be a tough-minded Christian.

If one were to go on to try to distinguish between ethics and morality with or without religion, the picture becomes totally confused. There are non-believers whose moral attitudes are indistinguishable from those of committed Christians, and there are non-believers whose moral attitudes are utterly different, although they may be just as sincerely held. On the other hand, there are Christians who claim to be committed whose moral attitudes are those that other Christians could not possibly accept. And there are those, Christian or not, who prefer to follow the laws of their conscience rather than the laws of the state. Again, there are those, believer and non-believer alike, whose anti-social behaviour is kept in check only by the dread of being found out.

There can no longer be any justification, if there ever was one, for treating ethics and morality as if they were merely outcrops of the Rock of Ages.

Christians – and, in particular, religious education teachers – can no longer assume that their moral stances are the only ones to take. This may seem obvious, especially now that Britain is a multicultural and multi-faith society, but it still needs to be said.

Religious education

Religious education, by one of those paradoxes that other countries like to think of as typically English, is the one subject that by law has to appear on the school timetable yet no teacher can be compelled to teach it. To anyone unfamiliar with English history, and particularly the history of English education, this may look like madness, yet there is a kind of method in it. Religious education, unlike mathematics, history, science, or any other timetabled subject, can very easily become, with the best of intentions, a form of indoctrination. The English system, while it cannot avoid this danger entirely, at least ensures that indoctrination is not sanctioned officially or officially institutionialized.

Religious education at one time largely took the form of 'Bible knowledge', an approach by no means to be despised but sadly limiting. The articles that appear in this issue reflect the changes in attitudes and teaching methods that have taken place since then. Alan Loosemore's article sets the subject very firmly into the context of the curriculum as a whole; Jasper Ungoed-Thomas discusses the relationship between religious and moral education; and Hugo Gryn suggests what role religious education should play in a multicultural society.

Trends 1978/3

Religious education in the curriculum

A. G. Loosemore
HM Inspectorate

Religious education has been a distinctive and often controversial aspect of the school curriculum in England and Wales for over a hundred years. The 1944 Education Act requires that religious instruction shall be given in all county and voluntary schools. This requirement has its origins in the 1870 Education Act which permitted religious instruction to be given in rate-aided schools on two conditions. First, no school was to use any 'catechism or religious formulary distinctive of any particular denomination' – the famous Cowper-Temple clause. Second, the teaching had to be given at the beginning or end of the morning or afternoon to make it possible for parents to withdraw pupils if they so wished. The 1902 Education Act empowered local education authorities to provide secondary as well as elementary education. Religious instruction in these new secondary schools had to be within the terms of the Cowper-Temple clause, but there was no restriction as to the time of day in which the teaching was to be given. In subsequent years LEAs drew up syllabuses – often in consultation with local clergy – as the basis for undenominational scripture teaching – Bible reading 'without note or comment', as it was sometimes called, to avoid breaking the law or risking religious controversy. The Cowper-Temple clause was interpreted narrowly, although its original intention was to permit the teaching of principal Christian beliefs. As Lord Cowper-Temple had explained in the House of Commons in 1876, the apostles' creed and the ten commandments were not *distinctive* of any particular denomination.

A notable step forward came in 1924 when the Cambridgeshire Authority published its syllabus, after two years' work by an advisory committee representing the Church of England, the free churches and teachers from various schools and colleges. The syllabus contained not only a general plan for presenting the Bible to children, according to their age and development, but also a scholarly introduction to Bible study and suggestions for teachers' own reading. During the 1930s, most LEAs had either adopted a well-known syllabus (e.g. Cambridge, West Riding and Surrey) or had compiled a syllabus of their own.

The 1944 Education Act

It was against this historical background, and the extensive debate at the time, that the 1944 Education Act was passed. It required that religious instruction should be given in every county school in accordance with an agreed syllabus prepared by a conference representing the Church of England, other religious denominations, teachers and the local authority. What had been a long-established practice now became statutory. In the years following the Act, a number of new agreed syllabuses were produced, some of which were revisions of pre-1944 documents. In the 1960s further syllabuses were published, reflecting current educational and theological ideas. The West Riding Education

Authority published its 'Suggestions for Religious Education' (1966) which took into account research into children's religious thinking. This was followed, in 1968, by the ILEA's syllabus 'Learning for Life' which advocated a thematic approach to biblical and religious topics, relating them, as far as possible, to the lives and experiences of pupils.

During the 1970s syllabuses have continued to appear, indicating that the agreed syllabus system of the 1944 Act has proved to be a useful means of preparing guidelines flexible enough to meet local and regional needs. In 1975, the City of Birmingham Agreed Syllabus and its Handbook 'Living Together' were published, stressing – as the title suggests – that religious education should help young people to learn to live and work together in a pluralist society, and enable them to develop the skills involved in coming to a mature understanding of religion. In the following year, Cheshire published its detailed Agreed Syllabus and Suggestions for Religious Education, and Avon produced its syllabus, in booklet form, stating clearly the aims and objectives of the subject. Nottinghamshire, in contrast, published a hard-back volume of over 300 pages of background articles, schemes of classroom work and syllabus outlines, under the title of 'Quest' (1977). The most recent published syllabus comes from Hampshire (1978) and states that: 'the principal aim of religious education in schools within the public sector is to enable pupils to understand the nature of religious beliefs and practices and the importance and influence of these in the lives of believers'. It should foster 'an attitude of fair-minded enquiry towards the whole range of religious and non-religious convictions. It should encourage a willingness to stand imaginatively in other people's shoes'.

Recent developments Other recent publications have included Schools Council working papers* on religious education in primary and secondary schools, and curriculum development projects on both phases. The most recent publication† on the subject by the Schools Council deals with the religious education of children between the ages of five and eleven. It stresses that religious education needs to take into account not only the ways in which children think and learn generally, but also the ways in in which they think and feel about religion. Starting points need to be found in the child's own experience, building religious education upon his growing awareness of himself, his relations with others and the natural world. The child's own responses may be evoked through literature, music, art, drama and talk – all of which may provide not only a stimulus to thought and feeling, but also a way of self-expression. The handbook stresses the importance of the teacher's competence and gives advice on planning programmes of work and providing and using resources. It emphasizes the main resource as the teacher's 'own understanding, experience, enthusiasm, special skills and particular commitments' which are all available to be drawn upon in the planning of work, and in the day-to-day activity in the classroom.

These approaches make great personal and professional demands on teachers, particularly those in primary and middle schools. Although

* *Religious Education in Secondary Schools: Schools Council Working Paper 36.* Evans/Methuen, 1971.
Religious Education in Primary Schools: Schools Council Working Paper 44. Evans/Methuen, 1972.

† *Religious Education in Primary Schools: Discovering an Approach.* Schools Council/Macmillan Educational, 1977.

many secondary schools have specialist teachers, others have RE teachers with little formal training in the subject. Recognition of these problems has led to the appointment of more local education authority RE advisers. RE resources centres* have come into being in different parts of the country to initiate in-service courses and curriculum development in the subject. Many recent reports and surveys stress the importance of this kind of advisory service, and the pressing need for adequate provision in all aspects of the initial training of teachers. This particular concern is expressed in *The Development of Religious Education* published by the Religious Education Council†, which represents the major professional, educational and religious organizations concerned with the subject. This report makes a number of specific recommendations affecting RE in the curriculum, including the following:

> 'that proper provision is made for an effective element of religious education in all county, primary and middle schools, both in its own right and as an adequate basis for secondary school religious education;
>
> that at least one member of staff with appropriate specialist qualifications be employed to teach the subject in every secondary school;
>
> that from 11 to 14 years of age there should be a minimum provision of two periods (or 5 per cent of the timetable) per week per class, and that all pupils over 14 should receive at least one RE period a week;
>
> that the subject should be available, without any disadvantageous setting of options in CSE and GCE O-level examinations, in all secondary schools and in GCE A-level in every local area;
>
> that resources and facilities for RE in both primary and secondary schools should be on a basis comparable with other subjects (e.g. history or geography).'

The curriculum debate

In the current debate about the curriculum, it is interesting to note that some of the issues new to some subjects (such as legitimate public interest in the shape and content of the curriculum and the relationship of schools to society) have continually affected religious education since 1870. Some of these issues are explored in the recently published working papers‡ by HM Inspectorate on Curriculum 11–16, as a contribution to current debate. The papers pose the question – what have pupils a reasonable right to expect, given that they are obliged to be in school until they are sixteen? – and suggest the following answer:

> 'In the first place, without any doubt they have the right to expect to be enabled to take their place in society and in work, and this

* Notably the RE Resources and In-Service Centres at Westhill College, Birmingham, and at the West London Institute of Higher Education, Isleworth, Middlesex.

† *The Development of Religious Education: A Report on the Recruitment and Training of RE Teachers*. Religious Education Council of England and Wales, 1978.

‡ *Curriculum 11–16. Working Papers by HM Inspectorate: a contribution to current debate*. Department of Education and Science, 1977.

means that schools must scrutinise their curricula most carefully to see what is being done, by deliberate policies, to meet these expectations. Insofar as pupils may marry at 16, vote at 18, and become involved in legal responsibilities, what has the curriculum – the schools' deliberate educational policy – done to help them in these matters of fundamental importance to adult life? More than this, even though it may sound somewhat grandly put, pupils are members of a complicated civilisation and culture, and it is reasonable to argue that they have nothing less than a right to be introduced to a selection of its essential elements. . . No one disputes the irrefutable case for basic skills and techniques; equally there is a case for cultural experiences and an introduction to values. There is also just as strong a case – less often acknowledged – for the formation of attitudes: to each other, to work, to obligations in society and not least to themselves. For themselves, pupils will need competence and an increasing sense of self-reliance, and the means whereby to develop a sense of integrity in the inevitably changing circumstances that await them.'

The papers are based on the thesis that the school curriculum should introduce pupils to areas of experience that are of equal importance – the aesthetic and creative, the ethical, the linguistic, the mathematical, the physical, the scientific, the social and political and the spiritual. The papers stress that any curriculum provided for pupils up to the age of sixteen should offer a properly thought-out and progressive experience in all these areas. They point out that ethics, for example, does not necessarily appear as a separate school course, but has its place in many aspects of the curriculum wherever serious moral questions are considered. Similarly, the spiritual aspects of human experience can be explored, not only in religious education but through art, music, drama, history and literature.

The working papers also include statements on some particular curriculum subjects and their distinctive contribution to the curriculum as a whole. These statements are intended to promote critical comment and discussion among teachers and other professionally interested bodies or individuals.

Statement on religious education

The statement on religious education – used as the basis for the rest of this article – states that the subject shares with other aspects of the curriculum the task of helping children to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, and social competence for their personal development and life in society. But it has a distinctive contribution to make in directing the attention of young people to the religious understanding of human life, and to the central values (many of them derived from religion) that society seeks to uphold and to transmit. The aim is to help pupils to understand the nature of religious questions and religious affirmations and to develop a personal and intellectual integrity in dealing with the profoundest aspects of their own experience now and in adult life. The RE paper recognizes that, because some of the topics with which the subject deals are equally relevant to other subjects, it sometimes forms part of an integrated course of study. Or it may contribute to other fields such as health education or education in personal relationships. However, the paper stresses that it is essential that the religious education component should be identifiable, clearly defined, and related to the total scheme of work for the subject within a school.

The scope of religious education

The statement points out that the 1944 Education Act assumed that Christianity would provide the content of the subject. Since for most children in county schools it is the most familiar form in which they encounter expressions of religion, and since it has had a formative influence upon this country's culture, it is generally accepted that Christianity should retain a central place in the subject. But there is a wide recognition today that children growing up in a multiracial society need to know something of the major world faiths now found in our community. In county schools the subject is seen, most appropriately, as an introduction to man's religious quest, and to some of its contemporary expressions in belief and practice, rather than as a process of induction into a particular tradition. Among the elements in a religious education course – particularly at secondary level in a county school – one would expect to find opportunities for reflecting on human existence, its mystery, and common experiences such as birth, growth, love, friendship and death. The subject is particularly concerned to encourage a reflective activity; it is also concerned with the language of religion – symbolism, myth, parable, metaphor and analogy. Religious education introduces young people to evocative and imaginative forms of language, helping them to understand that they are as important as the literal and scientific modes of language. The statement also emphasizes that moral education and religious education are not synonymous terms, but that religious belief can be a powerful influence upon conduct. Any adequate religious education must provide not merely discussion of the ethical implications that arise from religion, but an opportunity for the practical expression of ethical concerns. If the school, therefore, is a caring community, and expresses that care in the quality of relationships and through service to the local community, then pupils will be given deeper understanding of concepts like love and service and of what these may demand in terms of humane care.

Much of the work in religious education will consist of laying foundations for an understanding of religion in the realization that, for many pupils, insight may only come in later or post-school years. Schemes of work should provide for progression and appropriate sequence in the selection of topics while remaining flexible enough to take account of the differing capacities and interests of the pupils. As well as its intellectual demands, the subject deals with issues that touch upon the deepest human emotions. The pupil's perceptions of these matters (perhaps because of his own experience of life) may be far from trivial, even where his ability to reason about them is limited. Teachers, therefore, must be responsive to this range of awareness among their pupils, and help them to value emotional and spiritual capacities no less than intellectual ability or physical skill, and to find appropriate ways of expressing their own deepest convictions.

The agreed syllabus procedure, which has already been described and which is unique to this subject, recognizes that in religious education the school is closely linked to its local community, in that it is dealing with the religious traditions, beliefs and values of the society in which it is set. This is a reminder that the school is but one factor in the pupils' education. The influence of home and neighbourhood play a major part in forming the pupils' view of religion. Another important factor for religious education is the context established by the school itself. If the subject is inadequately staffed, or starved of time and resources, a clear message is conveyed to the pupils about the seriousness with which this aspect of life is regarded.

Expectations in religious education

The paper on religious education also suggests that the subject – like any other academic subject* – has aspects that lend themselves to an assessment of the pupil's progress and performance in his ability to recall significant facts, to reason from them, and to display a sympathetic understanding of the significance that believers attach to their faith and practices. By the time a pupil leaves school at sixteen, the statement suggests, it would be reasonable to expect him to have shown evidence that he can operate at a modest level of competence in such matters as:

> giving a coherent account of the main events in the life of Jesus;
>
> recalling the major Christian festivals with the events they commemorate, and examples of major festivals in, say, two other world religions;
>
> describing the main features of worship in a Christian church and of at least one centre of another faith, synagogue, mosque, gurdwara;
>
> discussing or writing about:
>
> (a) some of the ways in which language is used to convey religious beliefs;
> (b) some ways in which religious beliefs may influence behaviour, referring to an individual in whose life that influence is to be seen;
> (c) some of the reasoning and evidence that may lead people to adopt religious or non-religious interpretations of life;
>
> writing about, or illustrating in other ways, a self-chosen theme in the realm of belief or behaviour that is of serious concern to him.

The paper concludes with the reminder that although the cognitive elements in religious education are indispensable and capable of assessment, there are other aspects, concerned with the place of insight and personal evaluation of religion, where formal assessment and the notions of 'reasonable expectations' are inappropriate. This is not to suggest the view of religion simply as a subjective preference, but to recognize the proper limitations of the subject – particularly in a county school – and the influence of external factors upon the personal commitment of individual pupils. Religious education may provide the basis for understanding the search for meaning in life and an invitation to share in that search, but it is the pupil's own life that will provide the experiences that shape his response and test its consistency and quality.

This article has outlined some of the developments in the role and the scope of religious education in recent years. As in the past, religious education continues to be the subject of much public discussion and debate. Its presence in the curriculum is a reminder of some of the fundamental issues in teaching and learning in a multi-religious society, prompting schools to view their life in the light of such questions as:

> Does the school provide opportunities for exploring some of the characteristics of religion (beliefs, stories, ethics, rituals, experiences, and social dimensions)?

* The number of passes (or equivalents) in religious education examinations, summer 1977, were: GCE A-level 3,761, GCE O-level 36,942 and CSE (all modes) 42,880.

Is the school sensitive to minority religious groups in the community? How does the school attempt to deal with pupils' personal search for meaning?

Does the school take into account the religious dimension in its environmental and contemporary studies?

Are pupils encouraged to question, to reflect, to wonder and to face the essential mystery of life?

Trends 1978/3

Religion and moral education

J.Ungoed-Thomas
HM Inspectorate

'A person's religion is his own business' is a commonplace of everyday discourse on a level with 'You never know your real friends until you are in trouble', or 'Everyone's the same under the skin'.

Although folk wisdom may sometimes be quite wise, it does tend to achieve its aphoristic pithiness at the expense of accuracy. In schools, as elsewhere, while it is undoubtedly both civilized and sensible to treat the religious views of others as their own concern, it would be somewhat naive to ignore the possibility that, in one's own case, a personal commitment might well have significance in relationships with others.

As far as moral education is concerned, teachers who are religious inevitably have their own ideas about morality which will, or at least should, be expressed in behaviour and possibly in words. This will occur whether or not teachers are formally involved in religious or moral education; although if they do have responsibilities in these areas they are more likely to find themselves in a position where they will want, or will be required, to make their views explicit.

On the other hand, teachers may wish to keep their own views and attitudes private. This is not easy to achieve. Contrary to a delusion shared by a few teachers, pupils and members of the general public, teachers are not like St Simeon Stylites, isolated eccentrics, closer to God than normal mortals, yet cursed with a particularly uncomfortable position. Quite the opposite – they are members of a mutually inter-dependent community of frequently very perceptive adults and children where, as modern social psychologists inform us, every twitch bears a message. It would, in fact, be a remarkably withdrawn, unresponsive, impassive, and possibly inhuman teacher who managed to keep his or her ethical commitments entirely secret from colleagues and pupils alike.

Relationship between belief and behaviour

A crucial question in moral education concerns the relationship between belief and behaviour. While moral behaviour may be justified in various ways, any adult who is religious is committed to a particular position that is likely to exert influence at different levels. For example, a teacher who is actually dealing in class with the problem of how to justify behaviour can, of course, be fair-minded and objective about

opinions other than those that he or she holds. However, it would be a poor teacher who was not prepared to hold discussion on the topic, or who refused in discussion to indicate at an appropriate time his or her own views if asked. Neutrality in the classroom may be possible, even advisable, as a pedagogic device used in context: it is hardly either acceptable or practicable as a moral stance.

More profoundly, a teacher, by the very process of holding a religious viewpoint, is affirming not only that this is in itself good, but that it is good for moral actions to derive from a religious system of belief. In other words, a person who is religious is also a person who is making a statement about the moral value of being religious. This argument can be put forward in both humanist and religious terms. Sartre, for instance, has proposed that in making a choice a person does so not only for himself but on behalf of everybody. Any responsibly made commitment is a moral choice, and, in choosing, a person states, in effect, that something is good, and what is good for one must be good in itself, and so for all. The religious case is conventionally often cast with an emphasis on example, but is similar. It states that a significant characteristic of a religious person is that the the quality of his life does, and should, bear witness to his faith, and that one aspect of such a life is that it has a positive moral effect on others.

Moral influence

The very foundations of the existence of a religious person ensure that he is bound not only to have, but in some sense to attempt to have, moral influence. It is at this point that suspicions and doubts can arise, particularly where moral education is concerned. Fears may easily be aroused that children will be subject to indoctrination, or proselytizing, and that greater concern may be shown for the word than for the spirit.

It would be idle to pretend that such things have not happened in schools. But neither could they be described as education, nor do they deserve the adjective moral. Furthermore, in a profound sense they are not religious. For a religious person, moral behaviour is a personal means to the goal of salvation or enlightenment. Moral influence always has to be seen in that context, however much individual personalities or spiritual traditions of different religions may incline towards quietist or apostolic approaches. Thus, religious teachers will no doubt attempt to follow and set examples of good moral behaviour, according to the precepts of their religion. However difficult particular circumstances are, they will try to behave, and ensure that children behave, with compassion and kindness. But, if the religious inspiration is alight and not fading away, then the driving religious concern will be personal not social. The convictions of religious people obviously have profound social consequences, in schools as in society, but these outcomes are not of primary importance in religious terms. The moral influences exerted by teachers who are religious should arise in the first place from their personalities, and be apparent through the sensitivity and awareness that they bring to their professional functions.

Insight into pupils' behaviour

Successful moral education depends not only on the integrity of teachers as people, but also on the insight that they bring to understanding their pupils. In Christian thinking, the intentions that people have are held to be almost as significant as, if not more so than, their actions. It can, however, be difficult for teachers to grasp why children behave in certain ways. Teachers see children mainly in the classroom, seldom know them at home and often have to cope with considerable

numbers of boys and girls during a school week. Children, on the other hand, may have good reasons for behaving badly and bad reasons for behaving apparently well, and may at times not actually behave at all in the way they wanted to. When misunderstanding does arise, it can have unfortunate repercussions in terms of moral education if teachers stereotype particular sorts of behaviour, associate them with particular moral labels, and act accordingly. For example, a child might well resent being told off for being selfish if, say, the reason he refused to lend a pencil was that it had just been given him by his visiting grandmother, and he wished to ensure that he did not hurt her feelings by returning home with it broken or lost. Conversely a girl who was praised for cooperating in class with another child, about whom she was spiteful when safely out of the teacher's earshot, could be learning hypocrisy rather than consideration. The fact is that, in principle, however difficult it may be in practice, each situation needs to be perceived in its own terms if the underlying reality is to be grasped. If children feel that teachers proceed predominantly on appearances, they are liable to see moral education as a manipulative game.

The child and morality

How children are regarded in schools is equivocal. On the one hand they are the centre of concern and attention, since all educational activity and thinking is pupil-orientated. On the other hand, since children are being initiated into the adult world, learning from teachers in a teacher-controlled environment, they can very easily be seen almost exclusively as dependent on, even inferior to, adults. From a moral viewpoint, any such tendencies can be reinforced by the more influential modern theories of moral development, which in general terms postulate that children grow, through various stages, towards greater moral maturity.

Christ taught that in some ways adults could learn spiritually from children and that children should be held in special esteem. As regards morality, while it must be the case that children are widely thought to require education – otherwise there would be no call for moral education – a Christian perspective can remind us that any teaching in this field needs to value children as individuals in their own right. A moral person believes it is important to respect others, whoever they may be. In the classroom an adult who is seen to respect children is not only teaching a valuable lesson through example but is creating an atmosphere conducive to effective moral education.

A paradox arises for teachers, and indeed for all adults who attempt to base moral education on a real and sympathetic understanding of boys and girls and the nature of problems they face. It becomes apparent that while children have their own culture – vivid, immediate, and often intense – they also have to cope with many of the experiences that face adults. Conflicts of loyalty, grief, death, love, hate and fear are not exclusive to the world of men and women, but are conditions of all human existence.

Teachers' role

Teachers are therefore hardly in a position to suggest that because they are adults they know all the answers. Morality is not like mathematics. However, what teachers can do is to draw on wider experience, reading and understanding to clarify for pupils the sorts of problems that can arise. They can indicate how personal ethics can be developed to respond to problems, and show how groups and societies establish conventions, rules and laws to sustain the morality to which they subscribe. As pupils grow into students, it becomes possible for moral

questions to be dealt with more explicitly in the framework of the shared human predicament. For example, such questions as: While acknowledging the need for order, is it always moral to obey laws? How does one behave in the existential dilemma, where choices exist only between courses of action that are more or less morally unacceptable in different ways? To what extent does moral behaviour arise from instinct, or conditioning, or reasoning, or belief, or other sources?

Place of moral education in the curriculum

Over the past few years there has been much discussion of how moral education should be introduced into the school curriculum. Should it be separately time-tabled? Should it be taught as part of religious education? Should it be introduced as an aspect of other particular subject lessons? Should it be the responsibility of one or of all teachers? Should it be seen as taking place in lessons only, or throughout all school activities?

Such questions and the ensuing debate are no doubt more useful than the medieval pastime of arguing about how many angels could dance on the point of a pin. They are not, however, as P. G. Wodehouse would have said, of the essence. What is of the essence is that no moral education can be worthwhile unless it is taught by men and women with a personal commitment to a moral way of life. In this country, there always have been, and there are likely to continue to be, teachers in schools whose personal commitments are religious. The way of life of these teachers is one of the foundation stones upon which moral education is built. This is a fact that both those who are religious and those who are not cannot afford to ignore if they wish to introduce and sustain effective programmes of moral education.

Trends 1978/3

Religious education in a multicultural society

Rabbi Hugo Gryn
West London Synagogue

In the current debate about religious education the only surprising thing is that it has taken such a long time for the problem to emerge, and that concerned individuals and groups are just beginning to realize that palliatives are no substitute for long-term solutions. The debate is gaining momentum. It is to be hoped that it will be a fair one, although I doubt whether it can sustain a balanced nature indefinitely. I am somewhat apprehensive that its objectivity will be crushed by the many passions that surround it. This article is limited to a somewhat partisan presentation of the problem, by a deeply concerned non-specialist, and to two practical suggestions, the implementation of which would, I believe, serve the cause of religious education, both in the short and the long run.

Changes in the structure and composition of society

Virtually everyone – be they teachers, parents or students – speaks of religious education in our multi-faith and multicultural society as a problem. This, in itself, is a problem, and it would not be surprising if before long more difficulties and tensions, as well as paradoxes and

conflicts, revealed themselves. Recent history and current social developments in Britain suggest that this will be so. In part, because society itself has undergone internal changes, we are more self-consciously secular and our lives are becoming increasingly polarized. This is not only uncomfortable, it is also unexpected and paradoxical – unexpected, because the mood of scientific inquiry and technological discovery which characterizes so much of contemporary education virtually cries out for theological, not to say spiritual, validation and support – paradoxical, because the dramatic improvement in communication could, and was expected to, knit the various strands of society more closely together but in fact has not done so. In part, perhaps more objectively, and certainly more obviously, there have been far-reaching changes in the actual composition of society.

Since the heady days of 1944, much has happened that was not envisaged, even by the most far-seeing protagonists of the Education Act. The term 'heady' is apt, because, although far-reaching reforms for consideration were planned in 1938, it required an act of faith for them to become legislated in reality. The Act itself, in retrospect, left much to be desired, and its heritage of problems, especially for religious education, needs urgent attention.

It is true that by 1944 the war had turned decisively in favour of the Allies, yet conditions of peace could only be anticipated and by no means taken for granted. That anticipation was also permeated with notions of social justice and confidence in institutions that would surely undergird an egalitarian and caring society. The legislative success and creative energy of the late 1940s apparent in a Britain rebuilding itself, coupled with a dramatic rise in the birth rate, tended to confirm this much longed-for optimism. Indeed the work force was inadequate. Migrant workers were offered attractive, unambiguous inducements to come to Britain to join in the shaping of the destiny of this society, and to share its freedom and prosperity. Soon Polish ex-servicemen became coal miners, refugees from Nazi Germany queued at teacher training colleges, and liberated Italian prisoners of war gladly donned waiters' uniforms. Soon, too, citizens of the Commonwealth accepted cordial invitations to man the textile mills. The nationalized hospitals and railways and the urban transport systems recruited hard-working staff, regardless of race or creed. It is important to recall this history; it contains the genesis of our social change, and it indicates the direction of responsibility as well.

Positive and negative reactions to change

That this change in the composition of the population has brought about a series of reactions – both positive and negative – is also history, even if it is stating the obvious. The corresponding impact and pressures on education in general, and religious education in particular, bring us into the current debate.

Though I am conscious that my account may be necessarily over-simplified, the nature of these pressures seems to me to be the following; at one extreme there are those who fear change and, for various reasons, simply do not like the 'multiness' of society. They want to preserve the *status quo*. They want religious education to be uncomplicated Christian education. They see in the teaching of world religions a threat to the existing order. Their spokesmen are articulate and politically well-connected, and their appeal – to parent groups, as well as to general readers of newspapers and television viewers – is considerable.

At the other extreme there are equally articulate and politically committed people, who see in religious education a useful instrument

for furthering the sort of creative discontent that they believe will bring about radical changes in society. They argue that broadening religious education to the point where it encompasses all possible viewpoints and philosophies will help in the process of social engineering.

My experience, over several years of meetings and following the media, shows that very few representatives of either group are educators or professionally competent or committed in the field of religious education. Rather they seem to use religious education to illustrate or fortify political convictions and to score ideological points. My instincts urge caution and I feel some alarm.

It has, therefore, to be said as clearly and as emphatically as possible that these issues do not belong to religious education and that they are not the problem of those who teach RE. This may be a negative point, but it is often instructive, and sometimes downright useful, if undressed emperors are told that they are naked.

A suggestion for the short term

I must make it quite clear at this point that I advocate the teaching of world religions because it is educationally right and because it is an ethically sensitive response to the changed, and still changing, condition of British society. Something of this sensitivity is reflected in the 1944 Act, especially with regard to the device of the Agreed Syllabus. The agreement was to be sought by four parties: the established church; other religious denominations, which vary from place to place, and are determined by the judgement of the local authority; teachers' associations; and the local authority itself. It would be both courteous and helpful if non-Christian religious groups were to be invited to join as full partners in the seeking of such agreements. In doing this, the spirit of the 1944 Act would be enhanced, and the various religious minorities would gain a positive sense of partnership.

However, as a recent report of a working party of the Religious Education Council of England and Wales – a report entitled 'What Future for the Agreed Syllabus' – points out, the emphasis in 1944 seemed to be on the word 'agreed'. The emphasis in recent years has shifted more to the word 'syllabus'. That being so, I would urge the need for well worked out syllabuses, so that overtaxed teachers should not have to face the daunting task of preparing their own. To this suggestion I would add another plea: the syllabus in world religions must be child-centred. While the Bible is already increasingly taught in this fashion, world religions are still equated with 'other religions' and are therefore not treated with corresponding sensitivity.

A long term suggestion

The multicultural society is not a set of statistics – it consists of individual men, women and children, caring families and concerned communities. British society is enriched by the presence of Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Moslem and Sikh communities in addition to the various Christian denominations. To recruit and train teachers from committed members of these communities, and to provide them with specialized RE teaching posts, would serve as the finest illustration of the desire and intention to make our multicultural society work. A sound professional training, coupled with declared career prospects, would, I am confident, motivate many young men and women to opt for careers as RE teachers. Such a programme would place a degree of responsibility on the religious communities themselves to encourage some of their talented youth to serve the interests of the wider community. It would also be a challenge to the educational bodies to

create, if need be, special posts of responsibility for moral education within the field of RE.

Once trained, and with the probationary period successfully completed, these specialist teachers could serve as peripatetics – not simply to deliver the odd guest lecture or lesson, but to teach the full course in secondary schools and to initiate and complete projects in primary schools. Close sustained contact between teacher and pupils would create a bond of respect, understanding and – with a little luck – affection. Not only would the teacher gain the satisfaction that comes from an important task well done, but he could also act as a living link between the various strands of our cultures, as a sensitive interpreter of needs, and a dispeller of suspicions.

As we move towards the 1980s, and soon towards the end of this troubled century itself, I have the growing conviction that future historians will term this as the 'century of the refugee'. For various reasons unprecedented shifts of population have taken place. History will judge us according to how intelligently and sensitively we have coped with this phenomenon. For Britain these could be 'heady' days once again, with religious educators leading the guarantors of individual dignity – the hallmark of a civilized society. An aphorism from the *Ethics of the Fathers* in my religious tradition comes to mind: 'It is not for you to complete the task, but neither are you free to desist from it'.

Trends 1978/3

The disadvantaged mind and the need to activate it

J. K. Brierley
HM Inspectorate

How much can schools do to counteract disadvantage, given that the majority of the child's life is spent outside the classroom? John Brierley looks at ways of helping parents (and teachers) to understand the basic needs of the developing brain for stimulation and language.

The purpose of this article is to argue that disadvantage can cut deeply into the mind if it is a chronic feature of the twelve or thirteen years from birth to puberty. Evidence from children's growth pattern and from brain studies points to these years as a crucial time of learning – a time when the brain is especially receptive and resilient. But precisely because the brain is finely tuned to the environment and receptive to its effects, for healthy brain development a child needs, from birth, a great deal of active encouragement from speaking to and contact with an adult. Within these dozen or so years, much evidence points to the first five as being especially crucial: how babies and infants are fed, what stimulation they receive, what relationship they have with their mother, is vital for their emotional health and mental development. Most environments, even though degrading and unpleasant, provide the basic raw materials for normal, though *minimal*, intellectual development. For education it is important to remember that though each of us has been born with a brain that has the potential to develop

in a certain general direction, each of us has a 'wide margin of possibilities, which are determined by experience'.* Schools by themselves cannot do all that much to maximize abilities and counteract disadvantage. The family is, in most circumstances, the most effective system for fostering and sustaining the development of the child's mind. Programmes to help each disadvantaged child (for each has unique problems) need their maximum input in these early years and a strong, understanding partnership with parents if they are to be successful.

The evolutionary argument

Human evolution has timetabled the years from birth to puberty as a period of swift brain growth yet relatively slow development. (A child's legs develop relatively late – unlike a foal's, for instance – so that he remains for a long time within the care of his parents.) The brain of a five-year-old is 90 per cent grown but the body only 40 per cent; at about twelve, the brain is 95 per cent of adult weight but the body only three-quarters grown. This early development of the brain, including the sense organs, and in particular the eyes – for man is primarily a visual animal – contrasts sharply with the delay of growth and maturity, and is Nature's way of showing that parents and other adults are expected to decide the best routine. That the baby's brain gradually begins to operate at birth is shown by his capacity to respond, within days, to faces and voices. His brain has been programmed by evolution to recognize these patterns, because they are features of his world that fulfil his wants by providing food and comfort. As parents respond, this in-built power of the brain for early communication strengthens.

Evolution has seen to it, therefore, that the brain at birth is poised ready to learn. It is finely tuned and is in two-way dynamic relationship with the environment. It strengthens its powers by practice, and needs language, exploratory play, and models to imitate in order to develop well. But precisely because the brain is 'open', if children are educationally, socially and culturally deprived, it may be damaged.

Much of what is known about brain development lends support to the kind of commonsense approaches and attitudes most parents and teachers have been adopting for years. And it is abundantly clear, from what has been said, that schools cannot do everything to stave off or repair the effects of disadvantage. As the Secretary of State for Education has said in the House, 'Parents need to ensure that children have enough sleep to benefit from education and time at home in which to read and pursue school work'. What is less well understood is the early learning capability of a baby and infant; when he is awake his brain is struggling to correlate what he sees, hears and feels into a pattern, and he needs positive help.

Sensitive times for learning

What has been said indicates that primitive patterns of learning – arousal of interest and happy and secure relationships – are laid down in the brain early. As I have said, during early childhood there is an increase in the *weight* of the brain, but what is more important than bulk are changes in its internal organization, and, in particular, the branching of the nerve cells. The nerve cell connexions – the dendrites – branch out in early childhood, and the complexity and unique arrangement of these nerve networks may influence skills, character and general ability in the adult – though this is not yet established. Adult patterns of nerve interconnexion are likely to be derived

* Young, J. Z. *Programs of the Brain*. Oxford University Press, 1978.

from pathways formed in early childhood. Thus, when a mother puts a finger in a baby's hand, he sees it and feels it, and this makes a pattern in the nerve cells for touching and grasping games. Other complex skills, such as talking, writing, playing a game, are developed from similar patterns of activity set up in the nerve cells. Since the brain works on repetitions, it is important for the development of language to repeat words, phrases, and songs, and, in addition, to associate pleasure with repetition – warmth and comfort while listening to a story is a strong booster to learning.

It is, of course, unlikely that 'final' nerve pathways form very early in life. The dendrites do not appear to be static entities; even in the adult they may be built and broken. And, clearly, man has a plasticity and resilience not found in animals, with their quicker development. If for instance, one eye of a mature cat is covered with an opaque substance that lets in light but not pattern, after the cover is removed, the cat's behaviour and vision are normal. But *kittens* seem to be blind in the eye that has been covered, though the eye itself is normal. It is the nerve pathways in certain parts of the brain that have degenerated. Like muscle cells, nerve cells atrophy from disuse, from 'lack of experience'.

This experiment (which is, of course, an example of extreme deprivation) illustrates another important principle: that interaction between the brain and the environment, in the cat, must happen at a certain time for the brain to develop its proper capabilities. In this case, the *experience* of binocular vision and pattern is necessary for normal development during the critical or sensitive period. In our case, the retina – the sensitive part of the eye – does not develop properly without light.

Effects of environment on the young brain

While we do not know for certain what happens physically in the human brain, there are pieces of evidence that show that the young brain is impressionable to the effects of environment. The Plowden Report (para 28) reminds us that periods of maximum sensitivity in children are likely in learning, rather than periods of critical 'now-or-neverness'. Here are two pieces of evidence.

First, it is well known that squint can permanently impair vision if it is not corrected in early childhood, and most squints arise between eighteen months and four years of age. Recent research has shown that the brain is vulnerable to the effects of abnormal vision before about the age of three. Squint affects vision because, if uncorrected, it results in the failure of the child and the future adult to develop full binocular vision with depth perception – that is, to appreciate objects in three dimensions. Depth perception depends on the proper nerve cell connexions forming to link brain cells fed by one eye with those fed by another. They have to be in balance. By three they are formed and damage to vision after the age of three can be irreversible if squint is not corrected.

Second, in the development of speech the child has an optimum time when his developing brain can master the skill of talking. It is well known that after about twelve, a child suffering extensive brain damage on the left side (say from a road accident) may not be able to speak or may be very backward. In cases of early damage to the left side of the brain, however, a new speech area can be set up in the opposite side of the brain. The young brain is very flexible, but seems to lose its plasticity (for speech) at around puberty. In addition, children who have been kept in silence for the first dozen years of their life may be dumb or very badly retarded in speech. In one city

school, the head teacher told HMI of a child of three-and-a-half years who spoke only two words on coming to nursery school – 'tea' and 'please'. When the head teacher tackled the mother about this, she said: 'He doesn't talk, he has only just come to school'. The parent actually thought it was the school's job to teach him to talk. She had not done anything for three-and-a-half years. That is an extreme example (and the child may have been abnormal), but it is the kind of disadvantage that has far-reaching effects on development.

Crucial early experience

These pointers from brain research do seem to show that early experience is crucial to animals, and perhaps to man, in the development of the brain's capabilities. From birth, it seems as if the brain's nerve connexions – the dendrites – are susceptible, and become tuned to the influence of the environment. And it seems as if the brain loses its initial plasticity for speech at about twelve or even a little earlier. But this is *not* to say that the nerve patterns are finally settled by puberty, rather that they have emerged from among haphazard activity of the nerve cells.

This evidence could be interpreted as depressing – it points to the crucial quality of early experience influencing the brain. But is a bad start irreversible? The evidence is not yet clear. James Kagan, Professor of Child Development at Harvard, has produced some strange but fascinating evidence that, given proper stimulation, the human brain can catch up even after a bad start. In other words, given certain conditions the brain is resilient – a point that is of enormous importance to foster and adoptive parents.

Kagan found that children in certain Indian villages of Guatemala were kept in dark huts, and were hardly spoken to or played with for most of the first year of their lives, although they were loved by their parents. After twelve to eighteen months, the greatly retarded children left their huts, and were allowed to explore. By the age of ten their retardation had faded, and they were gay, alert and intellectually competent children.

The important conclusion from the evidence available is that the human brain does seem to have the capacity to catch up after a bad start. But if a child – after a poor start – continues to grow up in poor, unstimulating surroundings, if his bad experiences are *cumulative*, it is doubtful whether there is much hope of his catching up. As the Court Report on Child Health says, 'the disadvantages of birth and early life cast long shadows forward'.*

Perhaps (and this is speculation) the period of great sensitivity to the environment coincides not only with the big spurt in brain growth up to the age of five, but with the years right up to puberty when the senses are sharp and the brain is in a formative state. The early years are much more significant for later development than was realized until recently.

The implications of such facts and ideas are important for education. If babies and young children are deprived of decent food, stimulation, good language experience and exploratory activity, brain development may be damaged not necessarily by altering nerve pathways – though this is quite possible – but by creating an unsatisfactory state of mind, by providing poor motivation, and by teaching children to expect little out of life.

* *Fit for the Future*. Report of the Committee on Child Health Services under the Chairmanship of Professor S. D. M. Court. Cmnd. 6684 and Cmnd. 66841. London: HMSO, 1976, p. 3.

Speaking of deprivation among West Indian children, a Birmingham head teacher of long experience made the following points:

> '... children are often brought up by grandparents back in the West Indies – even, sometimes, if born here, being sent back at the age of two or three and then returning again at thirteen or fourteen. They do, in any case by and large, have the trauma of separation from parents in some way. Even if it is not physically, by going back to grandparents, it is by being left with untrained child minders for hours on end and not being allowed to play, nor being talked to either there or at home. This is a great deprivation for the young child in these crucial pre-school years when so much understanding of the world and of language is normally acquired; it has a very great effect on their learning and emotional stability in the primary school and both these cast their shadow over the secondary school also'.*

In a comment that is relevant to the critical period from birth to puberty, the Court Report said:

> 'We now know that the effects of early disadvantage can be much diluted by the environmental circumstances the child encounters during the middle and later years of childhood; and that it is especially worth making this corrective effort because early disadvantage tends to lead to later disadvantage, so that, unless there is intervention, there develops a compounding of difficulties. It is this train of events which is influential, rather than the critical effect of particular circumstances in early life considered in their own right'.

Counteracting disadvantage

Disadvantage, in an educational sense, is an uncaring home that adversely affects a child's mental, physical and emotional development. Disadvantage, in this sense, has little to do with economics. A 'poor' home, in the economic sense, may have plenty of affection, talk, and things to do and may also provide the child with the ability to solve problems collectively. Classically, disadvantage exists in its concentrated form in the city slum. In lesser concentration it exists on bleak housing estates in town and country, in rural cottages, on isolated farms, and in polished homes in commuter belt country.

In a *physical* sense, the infant mortality rate (the death rate of children under one per 1,000 live births) and the height of children at a given age map disadvantage, provided it is understood that both measures are considered in relation to averages of groups of children rather than for individuals in whom allowances have to be made for hereditary differences. Broadly speaking, differences in nourishment and care influence both. Overcrowding, dirt, poor food, bad housing, a father out of work, ignorant parents and broken homes send up the average mortality rate. For many of the same reasons, the average height of children of manual and non-manual workers shows a two-centimetre gap at three and a five-centimetre gap at adolescence. In one study of all short ten-year-olds in a northern city, most came from social classes IV and V, and had been brought up in poor conditions. While most urban communities contain masses of disadvantaged children, infant mortality and height indices are more a matter of social class and availability of facilities rather than 'town' or 'country'.

* Miss B. C. Hanks in 'Changing Contexts and Pressures in the Classroom', a paper read to the annual conference of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, University of Bath, September 1978.

None of the physical evidence tells us much about the effects of neglect on the intellect, and little is known. There are, however, certain factors which may hamper brain functioning and development. Among these are heavy smoking and drinking and chronic malnutrition during pregnancy. Poor food, especially no breakfast, which reduces the energy to learn and impedes concentration, is another. In addition, noise and air polluted with exhaust fumes can be harmful – the latter leading to a degree of lead poisoning. Anxiety may also affect memory and concentration, while worries about home conditions, such as mother threatening to run away or commit suicide, can lead to school-phobia. Shut-up answers to questions, lack of dialogue and opportunities for broader conversation, such as family meals, may hamper brain development, as may harsh work regimes on isolated farms where children are alone for long periods. In rural areas, isolation from language, from other children, and from cultural amenities when older, may be significant factors, though generalization is dangerous. A mother in a city may be isolated in a tower block, and if the lift breaks down her small child may be deprived of play with others and of opportunities for exploration and language.

Despite this depressing catalogue, even the worst slum, the meanest apartment, the remotest cottage should all have the basic raw materials for minimal brain development: speech, colour, shape, sounds, things to play with, objects to explore and understand. But so often the development of the brain in these conditions is minimal rather than extended to its full potential.

It is not possible to generalize about needs and appropriate experiences in the classroom. Blanket prescriptions are of little use – it is the individual that counts. Some children who live in rowdy public conditions may need more quiet areas: some from the backstreets need to experience living and growing things. These children may not be short of group play and language experience – they run errands, do the shopping, have their street games and gangs, go to football matches and help build pigeon lofts – but they may not get the massive back-up from home of books and explanations, and the opportunities to learn new words which are available to children from bookish homes. And to show the sterility of generalization, 'poverty' may cause one child to steal, and another to sharpen his wits and prepare for a better life.

Links with parents

To help counteract some of the effects of disadvantage and diagnose individual needs, some schools have over many years been developing and strengthening links with parents, some through the special post of home-liaison teacher. This trend seems right, for the American evidence on intervention strongly suggests that the involvement of the other children in the family as active partners is critical to the success of any intervention programme. Without this partnership any effects of intervention, at least on learning, fade rapidly.

Each school must, of course, develop its own way of working with parents, for each school and community is different. A good partnership allows time for growth and development, and never undermines the dignity of parents nor underestimates their job, desire and capacity to help their children develop well. And in terms of sheer time, family life is crucial to the success of education. A child spends only about 4 per cent of his waking time at school out of his first five years, if he attends morning school between three and five. From five to sixteen the figure rises only to 17 per cent. Mr Joselyn Owen, in his presidential address to the British Association (1978), underlined this point when he said, 'the present time is the first epoch which requires

so many people to make a contribution to education'.* One contribution could be an understanding of child development by parents – and future parents.

Educating parents and future parents

To help them to understand normal development and the basic needs of the developing brain for stimulation and language, parents – and future parents in the secondary school – need to know in simple, straightforward terms:

the elements of child growth and development, including growth before birth and the influences on growth of diet, hormones, drugs, sleep, happiness and general health care;

about the range of normality; how physical and mental development differ from child to child and the importance of finding success for each one;

some of the newer facts and ideas about the working of the brain, to include language development, so that it will be understood *why* it is important to talk to a child from birth, and *why* stimulation through very ordinary experiences is crucial to develop the brain's capabilities in thought and language;

some of the newer work of ethologists and others on 'affiliation' between mother and child (which may have to start immediately after birth); on bonding with the mother; on mother-infant relationships and interaction; on the importance of non-verbal signs and signals in communication and interaction, and on the importance of exploratory learning;

the importance of the interdependence of school and family. The family to serve as a secure base from which a child can test out his world, and to help him to set standards, so that he will be helped to establish his own; when he is older, the need to support at home the learning at school.

Informal discussions not lectures

There is no blueprint for getting over and discussing these facts and ideas. Some schools are experimenting with ways of communicating them to parents of young children – for example, by simple handouts designed to help parents of a young nursery child to use his senses: 'What colour is the soap?' 'Listen to your soapy hands.' Others are trying to provide a base where small groups can meet and talk *informally* to the health visitor, dietician, dentist, or see a small display of books provided by the local library, and hear the librarian talking about the use of books. Lectures are not much good: it is the individual problem of a child and its parents that counts, discussed informally, sometimes with each parent separately. The base for parent discussion groups is not necessarily school. 'Stairhead seminars' in blocks of flats have been held with some success in parts of Glasgow, where neighbours have provided a learning network for the spread of ideas within such groups.† In secondary schools, courses are developing in education for family responsibility, sometimes by a team approach that enlists the help of art, biology, English and home economics staff. To make any impact on those parents whom teachers want to see, but who never come to school, a one-to-one discussion by

* In 'Education – the Story of Success', presidential address to the education section at annual conference of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, University of Bath, September 1978.

† *Strathclyde Experiment in Education: Govan project*. A public report. University of Glasgow, Department of Education, 1978.

a home-liaison teacher or a health visitor is perhaps the best approach. Short television films, at peak viewing time, on some of the topics mentioned above would be an invaluable support for all, but especially for those parents who do not visit school.

Eleven words, quoted in a recent book* on the brain, sum up what I have tried to say – 'A good environment is not a luxury, it is a necessity'.

* Young, J. Z. *op. cit.*

Trends 1978/3

The education and training of teachers

Frank Makin
HM Inspectorate

What is good teaching? Are teachers trained to adapt to changing circumstances in education? Frank Makin tries to provide a few answers.

So much has already been said and written on the education and training of teachers that a contribution as brief as this can only be justified as an attempt to stand back from the intricacies of the mosaic and see the main lines of the picture.

Logically, no doubt, one should first try to discern what education is, though rashly describing what one sees may reveal a degree of colour-blindness.

To a large extent, formal education – and, to a degree, informal education too (the influence of parents, peers, and so on) – represents the transfer of the inherited collective experience, wisdom and aspirations of mankind from one generation to another in a form that is economical and allows for gradual adaptation.

Education is a continuous process by which an individual is enabled to satisfy, as well as he can, his own needs – physical, mental, social and spiritual – while adapting to life in a society (since for all but the recluse, association is itself a primary need) that creates interdependence, and therefore rights and obligations and some restriction of liberty. If this process works well, one can expect that individual and society alike will find better opportunities of fulfilment and of control over circumstances. Every educator's hope is that his pupils will turn out wiser, more knowledgeable, and better, than himself.

Given the complexity of social and economic organization in the modern world, most people need to be able to earn a living; to use their income in such a way as to optimize the satisfaction of their individual needs, within the limits allowed by the laws of the society they live in; to understand, as well as possible, the organization of that society; and, in a democracy at least, to meet the demands it reasonably makes of them in terms of obligations and self-discipline in return for the benefits it confers, which include the right to work legally and peacefully for change. Education cannot, therefore, be remote from everyday life, nor can determination of its content be the monopoly of teachers or of any other single group. Even so, the teacher's role is of awe-inspiring significance.

Servicing agency

The consultative document *Education in Schools** states (para. 6.9): 'A coherent approach is needed in which policies for the initial education and training of teachers, induction, in-service training, and other aspects of the development and career development of the teachers will combine to provide staffs for the schools better equipped to deal with their present and emergent tasks'.

The ordering of the sections of this consultative document logically places matters connected with the education and training of teachers after those sections that consider schools, their curricula and standards. Teacher training is, after all, a servicing agency. It would be most surprising if those who trained intending teachers did not have a very great deal to contribute to the thinking about curriculum and organization of learning, but it falls essentially to others to decide what their character will be, and the teacher-training system must be responsive to these decisions – it must serve the needs of the schools, not prescribe their diet.

What is a good teacher?

If it is accepted that schools are necessary – though some would deny it – they must be staffed by good teachers. What constitutes the 'goodness' of a good teacher?

Trying to define what is good teaching is rather like trying to define good food – it is more easily imagined than described; and good food is not the same as a good meal (for whom? when?), still less good onion, apple or kidney. But perhaps, while remembering that it is diet and dishes for individual consumers that count, one might attempt – obviously courting contradiction – a generic description of good teaching.

The good teacher watches himself in a kind of schizophrenic way, through the pupils' eyes – movement, gestures, facial expression; he listens to himself – the sense, style, pitch, register, modulation, clarity of his speech; and – more difficult still – tries to capture an understanding of the minds, emotions and experience that lie behind those vicarious eyes and ears.

The good teacher spots potential difficulties and finds ways of avoiding them, knowing how much better it is for the pupil to get it right first time. So, he is almost infinitely patient, but he knows when it is time for a controlled show of righteous indignation, and he is firm enough to be master not martinet.

He is much concerned not to brainwash; he makes pupils share his concern that all opinions be considered and their reasonableness weighed, but he is not so utterly neutral that pupils wander in a blanket of fog and vainly exercise their muscles against a feather pillow.

The good teacher is critical of himself, and of others, including his pupils; he encourages them to criticize, as he himself does, all they hear, see, read and experience; but he does it with an awareness of fallibility, tempering judgment with charity.

He is unshakably rational (as far as lies in his power) and promotes respect for reason while recognizing and allowing, with Pascal, that 'le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point'.

The good teacher looks beneath the surface of things. Whether artist, scientist, or historian, he asks what blueness, beauty, evidence, and 'manners' are, but in doing so he avoids mere verbiage, and trains his pupils in the use of Occam's razor.

* *Education in Schools: A Consultative Document*. Cmnd. 6869. London: HMSO, 1977.

He is passionate for truth, not merely the simple avoiding of lies, but the painful truth of the scientist, historian and artist. He rejects the comforting self-deception, the specious generalization, the meretricious.

He is conscious of the unity of knowledge, even if seen through a glass, darkly; he is in no danger of forgetting the place of ethics and aesthetics in education.

The good teacher goes all out for quality, but works within the limits of the possible, and acknowledges that if a thing is worth doing it may be worth doing less than perfectly, or even badly.

He is aware of his various roles as a member of many overlapping teams; he must fit in; be a receiver as well as a giver, and be prepared to lead and be led.

He is thoughtful of the needs of his pupils, not merely as they appear now, but as they are likely to be throughout life – even to the stage of the lean and slippered pantaloon – needs that will be intellectual, economic, physical, emotional, spiritual, social.

In short, whatever 'subjects' he may be teaching, the good teacher encourages three groups of qualities: i. awareness, receptiveness, curiosity, observation, sensitivity, discrimination; ii. order, self-control, generosity, cooperation, independence; iii. application, concentration, competence, economy, articulateness, expressiveness, creativity, judgment.

Future role

One would need a high degree of clairvoyance to know what the emergent tasks referred to in the consultative document will be at any distance into the future. Among the kinds of change to which a response will be needed are those in curriculum and school organization (especially changes in organization and staff deployment resulting from falling school rolls in the next decade); social developments; and changes that may arise from new educational measures – implementation of Warnock Report* recommendations, for example.

But other changes can be expected to arise from, or be necessitated by:

1. greater selectivity in recruitment of students, given the smaller number of places available in teacher training, and the smaller demand for additional teachers;
2. the requirement of higher entry qualifications, and the creation of an all-graduate profession;
3. the recruitment of more students from ethnic minorities;
4. the greater proportion of new teachers emerging with post-graduate certificate training, as opposed to those coming through the BEd route;
5. the likely increase in the pace of change in curricular requirements, teaching methods, application of resources and so on, in the course of a teaching career;
6. a corresponding increase in the pace of change in the general, social and economic context in which education takes place;
7. likely changes in career patterns of teachers;
8. development of systematic induction and in-service provision.

* *Special Educational Needs*. Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People under the chairmanship of Mrs H. M. Warnock. Cmnd. 7212. HMSO, 1978.

Changing circumstances

The system, therefore, will need to adapt smoothly to circumstances. But, as the consultative document said in another paragraph (6.7), everything cannot be put right at once. Many have good cause to remember that for fifteen years and more the teacher training system has been under constant review, as well as under strains of various kinds. The move from a two-year to a three-year certificate, and the expansion of the late '50s and the '60s – with the boxing and coxing that was entailed – were followed by the enquiry instituted by Mr Short as Secretary of State; by the development of the old-style BEd*; by the James Report and the ensuing White Paper; and by the development of the 'new' BEd and the Diploma of Higher Education. It would indeed be a mistake if anyone imagined that the providing institutions and the validating bodies had not been aware of imperfections in the system and had not been applying a great amount of thought over a long time to solving the problems.

Opposing views

That there is no consensus about the solution should be no surprise. The complexities of the problem are such that it is difficult enough to make a balanced judgment, without the distraction of extreme views; indeed in battles between opposing extremists, common sense is likely to be a common casualty.

It sometimes may appear that opposing battle lines have been drawn up, on the one side by those who emphasize the importance of high academic achievement by intending teachers, and on the other by those who argue that professional competence is more important. If it existed in fact, this would be a battle between 'big-endians' and 'little-endians'. The teacher with limited knowledge and perception of his own subject is not the one who will use his subject to illuminate the rest of his pupils' experience, or indeed use the rest of their experience to illuminate his subject, and this is true whether older or younger pupils are concerned. Mere knowledge of itself does not necessarily produce understanding; but understanding does not grow *in vacuo*. Further, one may come to breadth through depth. Surely well-stocked, disciplined minds and professional competence are more likely to be mutually supportive than mutually exclusive.

New attitudes and perceptions

Probably much of what needs to be done can be done not by adding extra packages to an already overloaded curriculum, but by a reorientation of ideas about what is already included, a greater consciousness of what is implicit, and the need more frequently to make it explicit – in short, a change of attitudes and perceptions. At the extreme, a teacher may conceivably teach English literature without giving thought to language as a means of communication – or vice versa. Similarly, one may teach the physics of light without considering the eye, and without asking what redness or blueness is. One may talk about a kilo of sugar without stopping to consider the mathematical precision of this concept. One may take pupils to goggle at Durham cathedral and yet allow them to remain firmly convinced that mediaeval people were behind the times. One may allow pupils to go on taking it for granted that when one turns the tap on water comes out, and so on. Much then depends on 'how' rather than 'what', on approaches rather than on additional packages, and on vision and imagination rather than on extra time.

* That is, a B.Ed. degree gained by a year's study taken immediately after the certificate course.

Different training for different jobs

There is, however, the particular problem mainly of those in primary schools – but not exclusively so – who need to teach over the whole curriculum or a large part of it. Consideration may have to be given to a different sequencing of the main inputs of academic as distinct from professional elements (if, for this purpose, one may consider them apart) according to the sort of teaching one is going to have to do. It may be that in some cases, a less advanced degree of academic expertness may be acceptable for the start of a teaching career, provided there is a certainty that this academic element will be enhanced for all those concerned at a later, but still early, stage in their careers. On the other side, it may be that others will need to have this in-service enhancement addressed to their professional training rather than to their academic achievement. None of this is intended to suggest that there are different classes of teacher, some needing better mental ability than others.

Paradox

There is, of course, an apparent paradox in what training has to do for all teachers. It must make them permanently self-critical, so that they are constantly disposed to evaluate the work that goes on in the classroom and to remedy defects in their own and their pupils' performance. At the same time it must make them self-confident – not arrogantly convinced that they know best in all things, or even in anything, but not blown haplessly hither and thither by every changing breeze of fashion. They should be given to a studious consideration of argument related to context that enables them to decide what makes sense.

Width of perspective

The same width of perspective that should inform subjects should apply also to the professional aspect of training. Course designers and validating bodies have given a great deal of thought to the importance of relating theory to practice, and if all have not arrived at identical conclusions this again should cause no surprise.

In one or two places there are some obvious failures to coordinate the different parts of the whole – for example, the work of education tutors with that of subject tutors, or the relative contributions of school staff and college tutors to the students' development through school practice. In one or two places there are some arid elements of theory, some failure to use teaching practice as a teaching and learning tool. But there have been great difficulties in the recent past – not surprisingly, given the great numbers of students in training and the large number of schools used. Certainly there has been some failure to emphasize sufficiently the development of language (which is not just a matter for primary teachers and English teachers only) and there seem to have been ideas prevalent – again only in a limited number of places – that the teacher's job is social engineering rather than improving each pupil's mind and capacity. It is interesting to note paragraph 2.8 of the Green Paper which, after mentioning things other than the curriculum that assist the school in realizing the purposes of education, says: 'But all these serve the cause of the pupils' learning, which is the school's main business and which is embodied in the curriculum'.

Whether one thinks of mixed ability grouping, vertical grouping, team teaching or traditional forms of organization, there will be a greater need for the teacher to have the capacity to recognize what causes stumbling blocks in learning, to diagnose these and design remedial action, to work easily as a member of a team, to relate his work to the whole curriculum and the whole educational framework,

and to be able to bring out the relevance of education to the whole context of life.

Outstanding qualities

Teaching – if it is to be well done – calls for outstanding qualities of stamina, academic and personal resources, imagination, sensitivity, versatility, integrity, and self-discipline. Inevitably, students have tended in the past, and may tend even more in the future, to be of a certain type, although not necessarily from any one class – that is, the brighter pupils with a disposition to respect the claims of rationality and discipline. They are people who, despite their youthful experience of very different fellow pupils, are nevertheless likely to enter training with an idealized version of what teaching is like. It is important at an early stage, and to some extent before they launch into preparation for a teaching career, that aspirants to the teaching profession should be given a good understanding of what the nature and weight of the burden of teaching will be. Their idealism should not be undermined, but it should be tempered by a cautious realism.

Smooth continuity

There will be a need for greater attention to be paid to the contribution of school experience in professional preparation; there will be need for a closer exchange of understanding – already happening in many places – between those who teach in schools and those who train teachers. These should provide for the basic needs of the new entrant to the profession. However, one thing is clear: the gears of initial and in-service training must be made to mesh more closely, and it will be for those who devise and review initial courses to take into account the need to ensure a smooth continuity.

Trends 1978/3

Training teachers in assessment techniques

H. G. Macintosh
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Teachers have become increasingly involved in the working of the public examination system. What is being done to help them assess their pupils' work? In this article, Henry Macintosh describes the in-service training courses organized by the Southern Regional Examination Board for the Certificate of Secondary Education (SREB).

In recent years teachers in secondary schools have become increasingly involved in the formal assessment of their own pupils. This has shown itself most markedly in assessment at or around the compulsory leaving age. In some countries, such as Australia and Canada, formal school-leaving examinations have been abolished and replaced by teacher assessment, sometimes externally monitored, sometimes not. In other countries, notably Britain, teachers have become more directly involved in the working of the public examination system itself and the techniques used have in consequence widened. These changes have not been without their critics, and the current emphasis upon accountability has led to renewed interest by central agencies in

the assessment of pupils as part of a more general process of evaluating the benefits of education. In their different ways the American National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) and the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU) in Britain illustrate this trend.

Training in assessment inadequate

This increased teacher involvement has thrown into sharp relief the inadequacy of much of the training received by teachers in assessment at both the pre- and in-service stages. Pre-service training has, in the main, failed to provide teachers with any notion of the potential and scope of assessment. The key part that it should play daily in the classroom, in relation to student diagnosis and course evaluation, has been largely neglected. Direct practical experience in the use of assessment must, however, remain the concern of in-service training. In the United Kingdom a number of agencies have been involved in this field, including Her Majesty's Inspectorate, local education authorities, universities, colleges of further education, and public examining boards. This article is concerned with the work of one of these agencies – the Southern Regional Examinations Board for the Certificate of Secondary Education (SREB) – and it describes some of the approaches the Board has adopted in the development of in-service training courses and materials for use in secondary schools.

Limited role of public examining boards

Public examining boards in Britain have always been involved in training teachers in the use and construction of assessment, in particular the preparation and writing of examination papers, but this role has been a limited one. Its prime purpose has been to provide the boards with people whom they can use to improve the quality of their own examinations. Thus workshops in multiple-choice item writing in mathematics are intended to improve the quality of the boards' objective tests in mathematics and not to familiarize mathematics teachers in general with a potentially useful technique. For this limited purpose boards are well equipped. They have experienced staff, they have access to a vast range of material – for example, in 1976 the SREB, a relatively small board, could have made use of over 30,000 English oral tapes – and they have a largely captive audience for instructional purposes. If, however, boards wish to widen the scope of their training and provide more general instruction for larger numbers, then they also have deficiencies.

The boards' approach is inevitably too exam-orientated and they lack the administrative framework to provide continuing support for teachers. In consequence the follow-up of many board courses is inadequate or non-existent. The scheme described in the remainder of this article has been designed to try and minimize these deficiencies by providing materials that schools or individual teachers can use on their own, in their own time, taking advantage of their own experience. These materials are, however, very raw, they lack adequate validation and have had insufficient time and resources devoted to their preparation. Nevertheless the author and his colleagues at the SREB believe that they contain ideas that are worth pursuing.

SREB basic course

The basic general course offered by the SREB at the present time consists of five units – an introductory one on defining objectives, and four on techniques of assessment called written questions, orals, practicals and projects. Five further units on course work, continuous assessment, assessment in the affective area and methods of presenting information about performance and elementary statistics are in varying stages of development. There is also a fairly extensive but

rather eclectic collection of more specialist material dealing with aspects of assessment in relation to specific subjects such as aural comprehension in English and music, and the organization and assessment of a field work expedition in geography.

The four units on techniques of assessment, which form the core of the basic course, are timed to last a minimum of three hours each, and they all contain built-in assessment activities (a science practical experiment or a piece of artwork, for example). In addition to the materials used in these activities, each unit contains overhead transparencies, a supporting paper or papers and a commercially produced workbook that contains additional exercises.

The introductory unit on defining objectives is rather shorter than the others, with a minimum timing of one-and-a-half hours, and it contains no specific activities. Its aim is to try to identify the reasons, both practical and philosophical, that make many teachers reluctant to define their course objectives in specific terms. This, it is hoped, will enable course members to recognize that extremes of acceptance or rejection, in relation to this issue, are unlikely to be helpful. It is also hoped that they will realize that there are real difficulties that need to be resolved as a prelude to the preparation of assessment. Thumping the table and saying 'Defining objectives is a desirable practice' is not the answer. In addition this unit provides an opportunity to look at the purposes of assessment – usually at the outset of the discussion – and to explore some of the implications of norm- and criterion-referenced assessment,* in relation both to the techniques and to the methods used to present information about results. The amount of ground covered will depend upon the time available and the composition and size of the group involved.

Wide range of assessment techniques

The central idea behind the basic course is to expose the participants, usually those holding senior teaching posts in schools as deputies or heads of departments, to a wide range of assessment techniques. In consequence, no attempt is made to concentrate upon those techniques with which the participants will already be familiar. The scientist will be asked to assess painting and pottery, and the mathematics teacher to assess a history project. One of the problems facing those who run the courses, therefore, is to persuade the participants to engage in assessment that they may not wish to undertake for fear of making fools of themselves. Unless this participation takes place, however, the value of the course will be greatly diminished and its principal object – that of providing general leadership in assessment within schools – will be defeated.

Flexibility of the unit approach

The unit approach is intended to provide a basis for course construction flexible enough to meet the varied requirements of schools, local authorities, and teachers' centres. A course embodying all or some of the units – defining objectives is normally made compulsory – can be run residentially over a period of from two to three days, on two or three single days separated by a period of time, or on a part-time basis – say for three hours on alternate Thursday evenings after school. The assessment activities can themselves be changed to make use of the participants' own materials. Finally, the four techniques

* Norm-referenced assessment is assessment that is concerned with comparing individual performance with the average performance of a group of similar individuals; criterion-referenced assessment is concerned with the comparison of performance against specified criteria.

units have been recorded on audio cassettes and made into self-contained presentations. Video tapes have also been produced for some units. Some dozen copies of each of the presentations exist at present, together with full supporting material and suggestions for use. Those borrowing the material are free to copy or adapt it in any way they consider appropriate. In return, they are asked to criticize the presentation and describe how they have used the material.

Structure of the course

It is worth mentioning that the present structure of the course emerged slowly over a period of years as a result of trial and error. The original approach, when the courses started in 1972, was far too didactic and there was little or no activity required of the participants. These early courses were all evaluated, both formally through a questionnaire and informally through discussion, and the information obtained from this led to changes and the gradual evolvement of the present format – a format which, it needs stressing, is certainly not the final answer.

Normally two of the Board's staff would be involved in the organization of a course, and although they have been run for as few as ten people and as many as 120, experience suggests that between thirty and forty provides the ideal number of participants. This enables an individual eye to be kept upon all those involved while making it likely that there will be an adequate spread of subject interests to promote discussion. The supporting papers that accompany all units are almost always issued as reinforcement material after the unit has been completed. The usual pattern is formal instruction (half an hour maximum), assessment exercises and discussion. Discussion may also contain further formal instruction if the discussion itself has failed to raise particular issues.

There will inevitably be participants in the assessment exercises who possess special knowledge of the subjects involved. Normally such people would be asked to elaborate in more detail than the rest on possible criteria for assessment and the reasons for their choice. They would also be expected to draw attention to problems that might escape the notice of less knowledgeable participants. To illustrate how the units work in practice, one of them – that on written questions – is described in more detail.

Unit on written questions

The introduction to this unit begins by suggesting some criteria that might be used as aids to classification when written questions in general are considered. How wide-ranging or limited in its demands is a particular question? How much reading or how much writing is required of those answering it? What problems does it pose in terms of setting or marking? Does it require the respondent to supply an answer (and if so how long) or to select one from given material (and if so how much)?

Considering issues such as these makes it possible to suggest a continuum of written questions ranging from 'open' to 'closed'. The placing of any particular question along this continuum will result from the answer given to 'What room for manoeuvre does it give to those responding to it?' Thus a question such as 'Paris is the capital of France – true/false', will be found at the closed end since it very severely restricts the answers that can be provided and makes certain that what is provided is either right or wrong. On the other hand, a question like 'Physics is fun – discuss', will be found at the open end, providing as it does opportunities for widely varying and justifiable answers. For convenience, questions along the continuum are then divided into three major types; objective items, structured

questions, and open ended or essay questions. A few brief do's and don'ts about the construction of each of these three types are then provided. These are spelt out in more detail in the supporting papers, which can, if required, be issued at this stage. Stress is also laid upon the need to consider the setting and the marking of questions as an integrated activity. There is little point in setting a question designed to test a particular skill or idea if the marking then fails to reflect this in its treatment of students' answers.

Group work

Following this introduction, the participants are then divided up into groups of between four and six, more or less according to subject. A typical group of thirty teachers will usually provide groups of this size in English, science, the social sciences and mathematics. Those who do not fit into any particular group can work in pairs or on their own. This last option should, however, be avoided if at all possible. Each group is asked to select a topic and a particular age range and write, as a group, two multiple-choice items with either four or five options, two structured questions, together with a mark scheme for one of them, and one open-ended question. For each question an indication must be given of what it is intended to test. The chosen topic may be the same for all questions or it may vary. One member in each group is asked to act as group leader and is given a set of overhead transparencies upon which to write the finished questions. No particular strategy for producing the questions is laid down, although advice is given if asked.

It is interesting to see the different approaches adopted by the groups; in some, all the members will write questions in all three categories and then select the best as a group; others will set all the questions as a collaborative exercise; the rest will divide up the questions by type, some writing multiple-choice items, some structured questions, and so on. This variety is referred to in the subsequent editing session, and the pros and cons of the different approaches are considered. To prevent time being wasted on choosing topics, the Board has a list for most subjects and an appropriate one is produced if the group shows signs of not coming to a quick decision. About an hour and a quarter is normally given for the question setting. It is never long enough for those involved, but the time is kept deliberately short to ensure a high work rate.

Variation in approach

On occasion, particularly when the participants possess a very wide range of subject interests, this approach is varied. In this case all those taking part, still working in groups of four to six, are given the same material upon which to write their questions. For this purpose, the Board has produced a four-page tabloid newspaper – *The Daily News* – made up of extracts from actual newspapers collected over a period of three to four weeks and pasted up by two teachers with editorial experience. This newspaper can also prove useful for an English group if they decide to write comprehension questions and lack suitable material. On one or two occasions, with smaller numbers, an extract taken from one of the Schools Council Oracy Project tapes has been used as the common material. 'Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight' has proved particularly suitable.

It is convenient if the writing session ends with a coffee break or lunch, as this gives the tutors time to skim through the transparencies and select examples for the editing session that forms the final section of the unit.

Under normal circumstances the questions provided by the groups will reveal deficiencies and, in consequence, will form ideal material for discussion and review. They will also, it is hoped, provide illustrations of the range of ideas and considerable ingenuity normally to be found in any group approach to question setting. If neither of these two results is achieved, then use is made of the Board's substantial library of transparencies built up from previous courses. These will, however, be very much a second best when it comes to stimulating interest and criticism. There is no real substitute for the participants' own work. When selecting the questions to use, it is very important to ensure that examples are taken from every group. In a session of approximately one hour, between ten and twenty questions can be discussed. If the supporting papers have already been issued, they can be referred to during the editing session; if not, they can be issued at the completion of the unit and reference can be made to specific points within them by way of conclusion.

Importance of follow-up

The crucial importance of the follow-up to in-service courses was stressed at the beginning of this article. In theory this ought not to present a problem for courses on assessment since all teachers engage in the construction of assessment and in the evaluation of its outcomes within their own schools. They ought, therefore, to be in a position to practise what they learn speedily and frequently. In reality, however, this does not often happen and what is required to ensure that it does is a framework of continuing support that will encourage the continuation of training on practical lines within schools. The availability and flexibility of the SREB materials is intended to help in this respect, but the resources of more than one agency are needed.

The SREB has tried to develop a loose consultative structure within a relatively limited geographical area involving key teachers, college of education staff concerned with pre- and in-service training, local authority advisers, and Board staff. Such a group ought to be capable of responding to school initiatives as well as generating ideas of its own. The informality of this approach is, on balance, helpful but there would also be advantages in some institutional provision on similar lines within a local authority area.

Dearth of courses

One further problem needs resolution – the extent to which competence in assessment is recognized by the local authorities, on whom, of course, the teacher depends for promotion. The situation is not particularly encouraging at the present time, partly because of the dearth of courses that would enable teachers to take what they may have learnt from basic courses, such as the one described in this paper, to a much greater depth. There are, however, signs that this kind of provision is on the increase. York University has just introduced a one-year diploma course in assessment. Colleges of education, too, are recognizing the importance of assessment and evaluation for schools in the present climate of accountability and national monitoring. The City and Guilds 732 Achievement Testing Certificate is likely to prove more attractive to the classroom teacher in the future, now that it has been divided into two parts which can be taken together or independently. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, the Schools Council has recently approved a proposal, in conjunction with the National Association of Teachers in Higher and Further Education (NATFHE) and the Open University, for the

latter to construct a half credit course in evaluation and assessment. This, when it appears in the early 1980s, could make a very considerable impact.

Need for change in current attitudes

The existence of courses, however well thought out and however practical, will not, of course, bring about significant improvements unless they succeed in changing the current attitudes to assessment of large numbers of teachers, and force them to recognize the positive benefits of assessment instead of emphasizing its negative features. This makes it essential to ensure that courses on assessment at all levels go out of their way to emphasize, in the strongest possible terms, that competence in assessment will contribute to teachers' professional development and hence make them better teachers. If this message falls on largely stony ground, then there will be no growth of the self-motivated, self-perpetuating training that alone can provide the real follow-up to courses of instruction.

Trends 1978/3

When young people start work: a government-sponsored experiment

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Over the last few years there has been a growing interest in the ways in which the vocational preparation of young people under nineteen who are in employment can be extended and improved. In this personal commentary the author looks at one experiment that is currently taking place.

Although the search for work has become a daunting task for all too many young people, the great majority – 90 per cent nationally – still find jobs or full-time training places within six months of leaving school. The arrangements for preparing this large group of young people for working life are an important concern of government. The term 'vocational preparation' is of recent origin and probably has no universally accepted definition. Here it will be used to mean preparation for working life in a broad sense. It spans aspects of what are conventionally understood to be work experience, training, vocational education, counselling and general education.

Some form of vocational preparation is now provided both for unemployed young people (under the Youth Opportunities Programme) and for school leavers able enough to qualify for the highly skilled levels of craftsman or technician. An important gap remains, however, because almost half of the school leavers starting jobs at sixteen or seventeen receive little or no systematic education or training after entering work. This article is about a government-sponsored experiment to discover ways of providing for this group. The long-term implications are important because the annual number of school leavers in this category has been put as high as 300,000.

Three mistaken assumptions

The reasons why such a large group of young workers do not receive any significant vocational preparation are not hard to find. They are rooted in a set of assumptions about young people and work commonly, but not exclusively, held by their employers. The first assumption is that many young people enter jobs considered to be relatively undemanding in terms of the skills or personal qualities required. Because of this, it is often assumed that they can be fully prepared for working life during compulsory schooling or the first few days of work. The second is that young people entering unskilled or semi-skilled employment are often thought to have reached the limits of their ability. A third, usually unstated assumption is that they will not need to make major job changes during working life, or that if they do, they will somehow adjust willy-nilly.

These assumptions are of doubtful validity because they ask too much of schools, take a narrow view of the demands of work and tend to write young people off as having no scope for development. Schools have – and accept – a major role in preparing their pupils for adulthood, but they can hardly be expected to accept the entire responsibility for preparing young people for working life. No amount of work simulation or observation, however well designed, can reproduce the problems that confront a youngster for the first time in a real job. So varied are the occupations entered by young people that specific educational and training needs are certain to emerge that could not possibly have been anticipated at school, even if it were acceptable for schools to undertake specific vocational education and training.

But what of the argument that jobs characteristically entered by young people below apprentice level require little vocational preparation? Studies of such jobs show that considerable improvement in job performance can result from strong motivation, personal initiative and sound working methods. It can also be shown that a range of mental, social and manual skills are needed whose acquisition should not be left to chance. This has been recognized for some time in such countries as Austria, Switzerland and Germany, where a very high proportion of young people enter systematic, long-term programmes of vocational preparation. Even so, some jobs are undeniably routine and undemanding. In such cases, the immediate job may have only limited and rapidly achievable learning requirements. But there will still be much to learn about the world of work. Moreover, it would be wrong to assume that workers remain in such jobs for life. Some of them may have failed for one reason or another to reveal their full potential at school. Vocational preparation offers a chance to develop their latent talents, perhaps leading to promotion within the firm or greater contentment at work or at leisure. For others, it will lay the foundation for later re-training after redundancy or help in preparing for a more skilled job.

Changes in the job market

Changes in the job market have tended to make the transition from school to work more abrupt, to place young people into more direct competition with adults, and therefore to raise the demands made on young people in their first job.

Two or three decades ago, the existence of jobs that were in effect the preserve of non-apprenticed early school leavers was taken for granted in most offices, shops and factories. They were low-paid, undemanding and usually transitional in the sense that their occupants were, after a year or two, expected to move into more 'adult' jobs. They provided a period for adjustment and an

opportunity to observe the work roles performed by adults. These 'young person' jobs have all but disappeared with the general decline in unskilled work. Young people are now competing for 'adult jobs', often at, or near, adult rates of pay. They remain for longer in a position of dependency and in the sheltered environment of school, yet employers expect competence to be acquired rapidly and, understandably, complain if it is not. It would be surprising if they did not prefer experienced adults to youngsters fresh from school. If young people are to compete successfully with adults (and especially with the rapidly increasing number of married women returning to work), they need to complete quickly learning processes which traditionally took several years. The employees' interest and the national interest thus coincide; raising the general efficiency of the work force and extending educational opportunity are both central policies of government.

The day release tradition

Opportunities for day-time further education or training have for many years been the privilege of a minority of young people. The Education Acts of 1918 and 1944 included provisions to extend part-time education by day release to all young workers aged from fourteen to eighteen. The implied emphasis in both measures was on continuing general education. However, these provisions were never implemented because the governments of the day had other, higher priorities. For those over school-leaving age entering employment, opportunity for continued part-time education was largely confined to apprentices, although some employers encouraged non-apprentices to attend as well. Because apprentice occupations were concentrated in certain industries such as construction and engineering – traditionally dominated by boys – girls had strikingly fewer opportunities for part-time further education. Even today, boys under eighteen on day release outnumber girls by a ratio of four to one.

Although some day release courses were imaginative and well run, others failed to awaken student interest and were poorly attended. Employers often saw little point in voluntarily supporting day release, especially when to do so would put them to trouble and expense. By 1976 it had become clear that a new approach was needed.

Unified Vocational Preparation (UVP)

In July 1976 the government published a statement in booklet form entitled *Unified Vocational Preparation: A Pilot Approach.** It was based on a joint study involving government departments (the DES, the Scottish Office and the Welsh Office) and the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), and on a detailed investigation by HM Inspectorate of promising local developments that offered both education and training as a coherent learning experience to young people, many of whom were similar in need, ability and attainment to the target group. On the absence of any systematic preparation for work for many young people, the statement said:

> 'At least part of the trouble is attributable to the separate development of education and training. For many young people entering the world of work, the only available supplement to minimal on-the-job training has been part-time further education of a kind which is associated in their minds with school and which they are inclined to reject as being no longer appropriate for them. To engage their interest and win the support of their employers, a new and unified approach is required.'

* Distributed under DES Circular 6/76.

The government statement contained a series of challenges for the education and training services, two of which were especially important. First, there was the assertion that vocational preparation should combine elements of education and training inseparably. This ran counter to the tradition by which education and training had been deliberately segregated, both conceptually and institutionally, with separate corps of 'lecturers' in further education institutions and 'instructors' in firms and training centres. A second challenge was contained in the suggestion that 'the provision should be clearly seen by young people entering work and by employers to be relevant to their needs and should be focused on the working situation'. This, too, was in sharp contrast to the traditional approach to day release, which had deliberately concentrated on general, non-vocational education for those non-apprentices who were uninterested in gaining a qualification.

Recognizing that the evolution of what was in effect an entirely new kind of provision needed a period of experiment and development, the government proposed a three-year programme of pilot schemes – now extended until 1981 – provided by local agencies but jointly managed and funded by the education departments and MSC. The pilot programme will be independently evaluated by the National Foundation for Educational Research. What follows is very much the author's personal view of the development of the programme so far.

Over fifty pilot schemes

In the two years since the government statement was published, over fifty pilot schemes have been run. They have covered young people working in shops, offices, warehouses, hotels, a fruit and vegetable market, rubber factories, food processing, the chemical industry, engineering, plastic moulding, local authority maintenance services, paper packaging, and the Post Office. Further schemes are being developed in floristry, agriculture, forestry, and other areas.

What is immediately apparent from this list is the enormous variety of occupations young people enter. With so much variety in the programme, no single scheme can be described as typical, but a specific case might help to illustrate how the ideas contained in the 1976 government statement have been translated into practice. This is a scheme designed for boys and girls in the textile industry, including operatives and ancillary staff, who would normally have received no further education and little training associated with their work. It has been developed in consultation with a local steering committee – chaired by the principal of the local technical college – which includes employer and trade union representatives. Responsibility for detailed organization rests jointly with the college's general studies specialist and a lecturer with extensive experience in the textile industry.

A textile industry scheme

The scheme runs from January to June during which the full-time equivalent of about eight weeks is spent off-the-job. The timing was deliberately chosen to encourage participants to think seriously of continuing with part-time study or training at the start of the following college year in September. The time spent each week off-the-job includes one seven-hour day at the local FE college and a half-day on company premises. As the participants span a wide range of ability, some may require remedial help in literacy or numeracy. This is established by tests administered early in the programme.

Three strands of activity run through the entire scheme. First, each boy or girl takes a sample of a finished product from his or her

firm – a garment, a piece of carpet or some fabric – and, guided by action sheets and other information provided by the college, discovers how it was made, what materials have been used in its manufacture, what kind of machinery was used, what chemical processes may have been applied, and so on. In this way an understanding of many of the technical aspects of the textile industry is built up, including relevant health and safety matters.

A second strand places emphasis on the development of the individual's powers of communication and understanding of social relationships at work and in society at large. Group work on joint investigations, role-play and simulation of work and social situations are all directed towards these ends. Such subjects as how taxes are raised, both from individuals and companies, and how they are spent, expand the young person's understanding of a range of related personal and social questions.

The third strand, closely related to the first two, is the in-company project, which is assigned after consultation among the company training officer, college-based tutors and students. A variety of possibilities exists: for example, placing the young person for short periods as an observer in other departments of the company, at other points in the production line, or with a supervisor or with a maintenance crew. All of these are aimed at giving the young person a broader view of the firm, its management and operations and at helping him or her to become occupationally more mobile. The student is expected to report on his experience to the company training officer and college tutor, who can often draw on this for off-the-job discussion sessions.

Although the general outline of the scheme follows this pattern, the detailed structure evolves through the regular informal discussions among students, college and company staff and is being continually developed as the scheme goes along. In this way the scheme remains firmly anchored in the needs of individual students and has a strong work orientation.

Curriculum

At the heart of the UVP experiment is the quest for a sound curriculum for young people in the early years of employment. One of the first tasks of the Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit (FEU) was to produce suggestions for organizers of UVP schemes based on first-hand experience gained through visits to the first schemes to be launched. The FEU's publication, *Experience, Reflection, Learning*,* deals with the basic questions often asked by those wishing to get to grips with UVP for the first time, suggests a model of the learning process from which appropriate methods of teaching and learning can be derived, and finally deals with a variety of issues that usually occur in the course of implementing a UVP scheme.

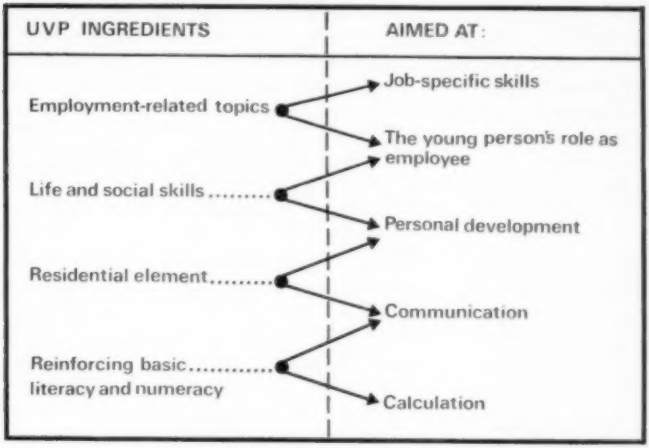
Experience, Reflection, Learning takes its name from an idealized model in which:

> '. . . the learning process should be considered as being in three phases. The individual's experience needs to be followed by some organized reflection. This reflection enables the individual to learn from the experience, but also helps identify any need for some specific learning before further experience is acquired.'

* *Experience, Reflection, Learning: Suggestions for Organizers of Schemes of Unified Vocational Preparation.* London: Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit, 1978.

'. . . it does not follow that the three activities or phases outlined should necessarily become separate sequential elements in a scheme. All three elements might well be present in one "session" . . . and would take place in a variety of contexts.'

There are various ways of looking at the main curricular ingredients found in most of the UVP schemes run so far. One framework that has been suggested is shown below:



This is naturally an over-simplification of the structure and aims of many UVP schemes, but it does provide a convenient way of illustrating what appear to be emerging as significant aims and ingredients. In the example of the textile UVP scheme described earlier, the emphasis on employment-related topics, 'life and social skills', and reinforcement of basic literacy and numeracy is emerging clearly. As the experimental period of the UVP scheme continues, it will be interesting to see how this simple conceptual framework is developed and elaborated.

Short residential periods, when they can be provided, appear to offer good possibilities for encouraging young people's maturity and self-confidence. The major responsibility for planning the programme is sometimes placed in the hands of the young people themselves. They have been responsible for route planning, hire of transport, deciding on and timetabling activities and planning meals, all within a fixed budget.

Personal development, attitudes and motivation

Most schemes have in common the emphasis they place on the youngster's personal development, attitudes and motivation. When consulted about the programme, employers have often pointed to the low motivation and lack of interest displayed by some of their young employees. Employers themselves, however, may be partly to blame for low morale. Writing recently about employers' attitudes, the President of the CBI, Mr Jack Greenborough, put the point this way:

'. . . when the name of the game is to improve productivity, there is only one side: the Industrial Team. This does not mean the patriarchalism that often characterized management styles in former times. It means treating people as colleagues, irrespective of their role, and presuming them committed to wanting the enterprise to succeed. . . . nobody can be expected to have that

> sort of loyalty who does not really understand what is going on, what it is all about, what the aims of the enterprise are, how its problems are being tackled, and above all who does not understand why he or she is being asked to do something in a particular way.'*

Yet workers below craft level have attracted relatively little attention from management and training officers. The organizers of the UVP scheme run by the YMCA at Cheltenham reported:

> 'On the first day [of the UVP scheme] a quiz was organized . . . which revealed that the trainees had very little understanding of their working environment, believing the shop steward to be the works engineer . . .'

Some firms fail to recognize that competence in many low-level jobs can be improved by planned induction, education and training. Instead, they tend to assume that everything can somehow be picked up from the foreman or supervisor, who himself came in by the same route. Bad and inefficient practices can thus be transmitted from generation to generation.

Some evidence emerging from the programme suggests that the influence of the foreman or supervisor in the development of the young people under his control can be of great importance. Ways of involving supervisors in the programme are therefore being explored. The presence of someone in the firm who can offer friendly advice and assistance, help with projects and keep an eye on the young person's progress at work, may well turn out to be an important feature in successful efforts to unify both education and training and on-the-job and off-the-job experience.

Developing a unified programme

Unquestionably, the task of marrying on-the-job and off-the-job experience is a challenging one. The UVP programme will not have suceeded in its aims of integrating education and training and focusing on experience at work if the time spent off-the-job is treated as though it were the only component of UVP. Even the least demanding jobs involve some learning and provide experience of work disciplines that are important for the young person's development. The programme ought to take account of this learning as well as that which occurs away from the workplace. To this end, some schemes provide an opportunity for young people to select a project drawn from the firm. This might involve either an investigation of the process preceding or following his own job or a practical exercise. In one such project, a trainee plastic laminator found out how a component could be made with less material, producing a considerable saving for the firm. Such exercises can thus give the employee a useful chance to show his paces. 'Job rotation' may also usefully broaden the youngsters' horizons by enabling them to work temporarily in a range of relatively unskilled jobs in the firm.

To be done well, the preparation of a genuinely unified programme requires that the scheme organizer visit the workplace to see for himself what the job involves and, if possible, to meet the foreman or supervisor, so that some idea can be obtained of the young person's strengths and weaknesses at work. In many ways, this process of enquiry, leading on to the formulation of a curriculum acceptable to a local steering committee representative of industry, is as demanding in terms of the teacher's professional skills as many a higher-level course.

* '*The Nuts and Bolts of the Economy*' in *The Sunday Times*, 2 July 1978, p. 54.

Occupational structure

One of the questions which the pilot programme should help to answer is how far a single UVP scheme can cater for young people from different firms, different occupations or different industries. Among the schemes run so far, the occupational coverage has varied from a single occupational group in a single firm to several occupational groups from several firms spanning several industries. Other examples can be found that lie between these extremes. What is clear is that as more occupations, firms and industries are brought within the scope of a single UVP scheme, so the problems of liaison with firms and design of job-related course materials multiply.

In any national expansion of UVP or similar schemes of vocational preparation, however, the simple single-firm/single-occupation schemes would probably be in the minority because of the distribution of small numbers of young people among a wide variety of occupations in many small and medium-sized firms. Experience gained from UVP schemes spanning more than one occupational group will thus be watched with particular interest.

Timetabling

The experiment is also producing a diversity of approaches to timetabling the on-the-job and off-the-job periods. A number of factors seem to influence organizers' decisions on the allocation of time. First, their views differ about the pattern that will best promote learning. Some argue that a regular off-the-job period of, say, one day a week enables learning to be kept in step with experience at work. On the other hand, what has been learnt in one week's off-the-job session may perhaps be forgotten by the next session, making it difficult to follow a progressive programme of learning. The convenience of firms is also important. Some have a slack day each week when young employees can easily be spared. Others may have seasonal fluctuations in business that facilitate release for blocks of several weeks' length. Geographical considerations may also tip the balance between one format and another. In rural areas, it may be impossible for young people to travel to a college one day a week.

But off-the-job periods need not be spent in colleges. Some schemes use youth clubs or employers' premises which are not associated in young people's minds with the formal education system, in which they may feel ill at ease.

In practice, many steering committees have opted for the alternation of four days at work with one day off-the-job but there are also schemes where a half, one and a half and two days weekly have been off-the-job. In schemes on the block pattern, time off-the-job is sometimes concentrated in a single period of several weeks and in others it is divided into two or more separate periods.

As for the total length of the pilot schemes run so far, although shorter schemes lasting for one or two college terms predominate, the range has been from a few weeks to a year or more (the full-time equivalent off-the-job of up to thirteen weeks). It is far too early to reach conclusions on the optimum length of schemes, and very often the choice has been dictated by local circumstances. Perhaps it is in any case wrong to think of a single optimum when the demands on the young person made by different occupations vary so much.

Response to the pilot programme

Some industrial training boards and colleges have greeted the government statement with enthusiasm. Others have been more cautious, preferring to stick to well-established higher-level courses and the familiar student clientele. Developing new types of provision is also hard work, especially when close contacts with employers have

to be built up, young people's workplaces visited and new approaches to teaching devised. Understandably, not all colleges feel at ease facing these challenges. Marketing schemes to sceptical employers is an unfamiliar role for many of them. However, many of those who have participated in the programme report that the effort has its rewards in showing how a neglected group of young people can be helped. To aid colleges and other scheme organizers in their task, various kinds of assistance are available. Three field organizers* are ready to advise colleges (without charge) on how to develop and market UVP; a publicity folder designed to explain the experiment to employers has been printed; and twelve UVP regional workshops, attended by over 430 FE teachers, training officers and others, have been held, mainly in FE colleges. Workshops on teaching methods are under consideration.

One issue to emerge from the response of colleges to the UVP pilot schemes has been the status of 'low-level' schemes for young people. FE teachers who have been involved in UVP say that it is very demanding in time and teaching skills. This needs to be recognized by LEAs and principals who are responsible for ensuring that UVP schemes are adequately staffed. The provisions of the Burnham FE Report on grading of staff and contact hours are not, as some appear to think, an insuperable obstacle, although the time may come when the Burnham FE Committee may want to review these arrangements. Recognition of the important role colleges have to play in this field is spreading gradually, and with it acceptance of the commitment in manpower resources.

Employers and young people tend to be wary at the outset. The task of persuading employers to participate has not been easy – even with a financial incentive of £2 per employee per day (raised in January 1978 to £4). But employers who participated in the early schemes have usually been happy to send young people on later schemes. Some have spoken glowingly of the improvement in their employees' attitudes, appearance and performance.

As for the young people themselves, their response has been encouraging, and the drop-out rate has been quite low. They like the adult atmosphere and the emphasis on work, and seem to appreciate the growth in self-confidence which UVP often encourages. Some are continuing with education or training programmes after finishing UVP. Most encouragingly, it has been reported that recruitment to UVP schemes which have been repeated has been easier because the news of their value has been passed on by the first round of young people to their friends at work.

* The field organizers can be contacted by writing to: UVP Field Organizers, Room 4/34, Department of Education and Science, Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH (Tel: (01)–928 9222, Ext 3597 or 3168).

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

European Education Today

For those readers who imagine that problems in education are somehow unique to Britain, the recent speech by Georg Kahn-Ackermann, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, to the conference of the International Council for Educational Media (ICEM) would have come as quite a surprise. In his 30-minute-long speech entitled 'The Problems Facing Education Today', Mr Kahn-Ackermann not only stressed the common nature of the problems facing Western European society at the present time, but also said that the British education system seemed to him to be relatively problem-free.

After pointing out how optimistic the Council of Europe had felt about education in the 1960s – when it seemed as if there would be constantly increasing financial resources available, when it was assumed that it was only a matter of time before advances in technology completely revolutionized teaching, and when the aim was compulsory education up to the age of eighteen – Mr Kahn-Ackermann went on to explain what had actually happened. He listed all the familiar problems – unemployment, financial cutbacks, employers' complaints about the calibre of school leavers, political unrest among the young unemployed, changes in the composition of Western society owing to immigration and urbanization, and the worryingly large number of illiterates – without directly suggesting any solutions at this point. What he did do, however, was to outline the Council of Europe's attitudes to the various levels of education, and from this some helpful guidelines and suggestions emerged.

Taking the various stages of education in order, Mr Kahn-Ackermann first talked of the increase in demand for pre-school education with the rise in the number of working women, and stated that the Council of Europe favoured free education for all children for two years before compulsory schooling.

Moving on to primary and secondary education, Mr Kahn-Ackermann said that he felt young people were being inadequately prepared to face their responsibilities as citizens in today's world. He advocated lessons on politics, on the way that a democracy functions, and on family life, so that those who are legally regarded as adults are properly equipped to enjoy their civil rights. Mr Kahn-Ackermann emphasized the need for better careers advice and the introduction of work-experience schemes in schools. He also condemned specialization at an early age. The speaker concluded his discussion of compulsory education with a demand for a curriculum catering for Europe's new multicultural population, and roundly condemned the general feeling of apathy towards the teaching of foreign languages. He deplored the fact that many European politicians are unable to communicate, to any great degree, in anything but their native tongue (the speaker himself was clearly not of this number, however) and advocated the compulsory learning of two foreign languages in schools.

Mr Kahn-Ackermann spoke more briefly on university education, merely pointing out that more attention should be paid to training graduates for life after higher education.

Passing on to adult education, the speaker said that it was here that many of the inadequacies of the school education system could be remedied. Adult education establishments should be combating the problem of adult illiteracy, retraining the unemployed or those dissatisfied with their chosen career, preparing people for retirement and, most important of all, continuing the process of 'life-long education'.

Mr Kahn-Ackermann touched on the problems accompanying the fall in the school population, and the need for the continual retraining of teachers to cope with the innovations outlined earlier in his speech. One way of ensuring that teachers kept in touch, he said, was to make a period of outside work experience compulsory.

Finally, Mr Kahn-Ackermann spoke of the encouraging increase in open public debate on problems in education, and underlined the importance of European countries learning from one another's successes and failures. 'International cooperation in education is not a luxury', he said; it should be seen as the means to a peaceful solution of the problems facing Western European countries today.

Ann Hodgson

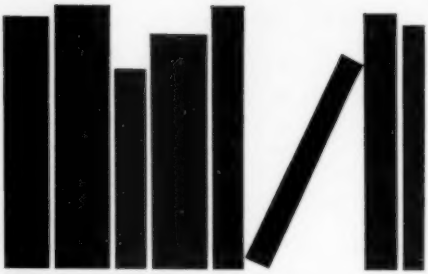
Basic education statistics

Public Sector in England and Wales and Universities in Great Britain

		1966–67[1]	1974–75[1]	1975–76[1]	1976–77[1]
Schools					
Nursery:	Number of schools	464	612	631	648
	Number of pupils (thousands)	29	48	50	52
Primary[2]:	Number of schools	22,831	22,280	23,353	23,364
	Number of pupils under 5 (thousands)	211	400	438	425
	Number of pupils aged 5 and over (thousands)	4,298	4,794	4,727	4,660
	Pupil/teacher ratio[3]	27·9	24·2	23·9	23·8
Secondary[4]:	Number of schools	5,729	5,035	4,982	4,988
	Number of pupils (thousands)	2,833	3,827	3,936	4,039
	Percentage in comprehensives[4]	14·4	69·7	75·6	79·9
	Pupil/teacher ratio[3]	18·2	17·2	17·0	17·0
Special:	Number of schools	797	1,489	1,505	1,541
	Number of pupils (thousands)	69	123	125	127
School leavers:	Percentage with				
	No GCE or CSE attempts	49·0*	18·0	15·6	14·2
	5 or more higher grade O-level/CSEs[5], but no A-levels	8·0	9·0	9·0	9·2
	2 or more A-levels	11·8	12·2	12·7	12·4
Teachers	Full-time in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools	295,948	419,999	432,014	436,296P
	Full-time in further education colleges[6]	46,161	70,147	72,595	73,091P
Major establishments of further education[7] –total enrolments (thousands)		1,801·3	1,949·8	2,031·1	1,922·0
of which					
Full-time and sandwich		286·8	437·8	486·2	501·2
Part-time day		711·9	726·9	743·3	702·6
Evening only		802·5	785·1	801·6	718·2
Percentage of full-time and sandwich students in polytechnics		..	18·9	20·1	22·7
University students in Great Britain (thousands)[8]		184·2	250·6	261·3	271·8
Open University students in United Kingdom (thousands)[9]		.	53·8	56·0	61·2
Participation in full-time education[10] (as a percentage of age group)					
2–4 school[11]		11·0	21·8	24·7	25·7
16–18 school and further education college[12]		22·9	35·6	36·1	37·8
19–20 further education colleges[13]		4·2	8·2	8·1	8·8
universities		4·5	6·5	6·6	6·7
Expenditure[14]					
Total: at constant (1977 survey) prices[15] £million		4,540	6,605	6,706	6,746P
as percentage of Gross National Product[16]		4·7	6·3	6·4	6·2

[1] Academic year. [2] Including middle deemed primary schools and immigrant centres. [3] Ratios take account of the full-time equivalent of part-time teachers and count each part-time pupil as 0·5. For 1974–75 *et seq* only qualified teachers are included. [4] Including middle deemed secondary schools. [5] O-level grades A–C and CSE grade 1. [6] Maintained and assisted colleges only (including former colleges of education). [7] Maintained assisted and grant-aided. [8] Full-time students only. [9] Undergraduate, postgraduate and post-experience. [10] In maintained, direct grant and independent establishments. [11] Each part-time pupil counted as one. [12] Including teacher training colleges and universities. [13] Including teacher training colleges. [14] Financial years data. [15] England and Wales. [16] United Kingdom public expenditure on education (including school meals and milk) as a percentage of GNP at market prices. P Provisional. * Estimated.

Detailed statistics of education (in seven annual volumes) are on sale at HMSO bookshops. Summary statistics (facts cards) relating to each of the seven volumes are available free on request from the DES Statistics Branch (Telephone 01–928 9222 ext 2776).



Book Reviews

Paths to excellence and the Soviet school
John Dunstan
NFER £9·75 paperback
As the author says in his introduction: 'In view of the interest which the topic (Soviet secondary education) has attracted in the West, there is a surprising absence of detailed treatment of it in English'. John Dunstan's book goes a long way to remedy this situation.

Uninitiated readers will be grateful for Mr Dunstan's first two chapters, which give a succinct history of Soviet education since the Revolution and a clearly expressed description of the secondary general school in the Soviet Union today.

From there the author goes on to describe various deviations from the norm – schools for the arts, sports and circus schools, foreign language schools, mathematics and physics boarding schools, mass schools with a special profile, schools providing optional studies and schools experimenting with streaming. He also mentions the numerous extracurricular activities in academic studies – 'the mass school's sole means of encouraging special intellectual activities in children up to the age of fourteen' – and the academic 'Olympiads' that are intended to raise the general standard of education in the subject concerned, as well as selecting talent for the 'vuzy' (institutions of higher education). In each case he provides a brief background history – often using the 1958 debate on education as his starting point – as many statistics as are available on the size and number of the various schools, brief details of their aims, organization and selection procedure, and – most interesting of all – attitudes towards them by the government and the general public, and an assessment of their success.

Those who are surprised by the very notion of specialist schools in a Communist country such as the USSR, and feel that this smacks of elitism, are early on reminded by the author that: 'they are a classic example of the meritocratic interpretation of the principle of equality of opportunity'. This idea is again taken up in the final chapter: 'To sum up, it may be said that schools for talented children offer them considerable career advantages, but such benefits are not restricted to young people already in superior social circumstances at the time of entry, nor are these schools by any means the only paths to excellence open to the Soviet child'.

What emerges most strongly from Mr Dunstan's excellent, comprehensive study is that there is no consensus about the continuing place for specialist schools in the Soviet education system. The 'egalitarians' feel that the emphasis should be on the mass school with a standard course and curriculum for all pupils, and that children should develop their particular talent or talents in specialist clubs after lessons – in clubs attached to 'vuzy', in evening, correspondence and summer schools and in the so-called 'Little Academies'. The 'differentiators', on the other hand, feel that there is a definite place for the specialist school or streaming within forms, since the secondary general school does not cater adequately for the gifted child. At the present time, the only solution in any sense acceptable to both sides seems to be the mass school offering optional studies for the older pupils: 'The two perspectives meet in the compromise notion of optional studies, which are an adjunct to the standard course. They are acceptable to the egalitarians because the latter is preserved and to the differentiators because they indeed provide a framework for the deepening of knowledge and the development of interests and abilities'.

A fascinating if overpriced book, which, in the main, successfully avoids a purely conventional Western assessment of the situation.

ANN HODGSON

International research in early childhood education
Maurice Chazan (editor)
NFER £6·95 hardback
This book, edited by Maurice Chazan, is a review of research trends and projects in seven countries. It aims to give basic information about current and recent projects in countries where there has been a great interest

in early childhood. Limitations of space have meant that neither British nor American projects have been included.

As is often the case in an edited collection of papers from different contributors, the papers vary tremendously. All are informative, but the depth of information and the style of presentation differ considerably. The contribution from the Netherlands, with its illustrative approach, is particularly readable and informative.

It is interesting to see how often researchers from the different countries have shared the same concerns – notably the compensatory and preventive role of early childhood education, and the effects of teacher intervention or participation on cognitive and linguistic development. Increasingly, there is greater emphasis on projects concerned with intervention in the home and parental involvement, accompanied by a broadening of the research approach in the field of early childhood education, to include sociological perspectives as well as the psychological viewpoint. Cognisance is taken too of the need for research projects to be of practical use, both to practitioners and policy makers.

Those interested in research, as well as researchers themselves, will find this book with its numerous reference lists a source of valuable information and comment from which to proceed to a more detailed study of the many projects included in the reports from the various countries.

B. STANILAND

Timetabling models for secondary schools

F. B. Salt

NFER £6·30 paperback

This book proposes an approach to timetabling in which the major obstacles to completion are predicted and accommodated before the compilation begins; that having been accomplished, information may be processed quickly, according to a definite system or model. For example, where a subject gives rise to more teaching groups than there are periods in the cycle, there must inevitably be times when it occurs more than once. The author argues that dealing with such clashes should not be postponed until necessity or desperation forces decisions which are likely to be unfortunate, but should be built in at the outset. Similarly, other variables – time allocation, staff, etc. – are systematically integrated according to a set of curricular and organizational decisions of which the model is a statement. Thus, educational decisions are divorced from the actual construction of the timetable, although there are likely to be limited areas where the two must be weighed together.

Anyone with an interest in timetabling would do well to read this book. Those who are compelled to undertake such work, against their inclination, would find it a useful practical manual. It is relevant to virtually any form of organization to some degree, although streaming or banding, where curricula are markedly differentiated, causes particular problems. The book demonstrates a variety of applications.

It has some faults, however, and one in particular. Mr Salt has a tendency to throw in like ground-bait too many value-judgements and gratuitous opinions, apparently to justify his thesis, which is, in fact, quite capable of standing up without such support. Nor does it depend upon proof or allegation of the failure of other approaches; many of Mr. Salt's basic principles are fundamental to any logical approach. But that does not detract from the value of his book.

EDWIN SCOTT

Public accountability and the schooling system: a sociology of school board democracy

William Bacon

Harper and Row £4·95

This is an important and timely book. Based upon the author's researches into the functioning of school management in Sheffield, it takes a critical look at the move towards a democratic system of school government that has recently culminated in the Taylor Report. Sheffield had, almost from the time of the 1870 Act, a centralist tradition of school management, which even the 1944 Act failed to change. But from 1970 onwards, it began to experiment with a new participatory system of individual managing bodies for each of its many schools, and in so doing it anticipated some of the major recommendations of the Taylor Committee.

This book gives the results of the author's research into the effects of these school board reforms on four specific groups, namely

parents, teachers, head teachers and education officials. The conclusions are interesting. The involvement of parents does not seem to lead to greater public accountability or make schools more responsive to local needs. The involvement of teachers has not produced real changes in the power structure of schools though it may have encouraged head teachers to develop a more flexible style of leadership. Further, the role of the new school boards has remained a 'marginal and symbolic' one, and they have served to reinforce the power of the full-time professional administrators. The school boards tend to identify themselves with the policies of the local education authority, and enable the latter to deflect hostile groups by claiming participation. They undertake the minor administrative chores, and so leave the central administrative or political élite more time to devote to central policy decisions. And they help the authority to fight for more resources for education in times of retrenchment and economy.

The general conclusion is that the whole participatory movement in Sheffield was not a grass roots movement, but one initiated by the central authority when its leadership was called in question. It does not re-allocate power, but has a number of tactical advantages for those running the schools, and it does not promote real links with the community at large, but tends to bring into participation only a minority of well-educated middle class people.

Sheffield may not be a microcosm of the nation, but the author's findings, and the more general hypotheses which he erects upon them, ought to be compulsory reading for all concerned with the education system, whether or not the Taylor Report is implemented.

D. W. SYLVESTER

Design in general education: eight projects

John Harahan

Heinemann Educational £8·20 hardback, £4·20 paperback

The widespread interest in the development of design education in schools has led to many design projects being undertaken in recent years. The types of project, their purpose, the way they are organized, and the students involved vary enormously, as indeed does their success. The editor has brought together eight such projects which, while being widely different in many respects, share the same common objective of using the design experience as an educational pool.

In the introduction to the book, the editor expresses his misgivings about using 'the end product' of a design project to assess the effectiveness of the project; 'the production of artefacts that are assumed to be worthwhile ends in themselves, which can arise from attempts to transfer misunderstood vestigial or derivative ideas from outside to serve as school models, is perhaps a questionable activity in schools . . . much has been written about design methodology, but the solution of a problem in an educational context should, it seems to me, be primarily concerned with those aspects of the students' response to the problem that involve a search for decisions as to *how* to proceed. In other words, the student must be helped to develop his own methodology, in contrast to the frequent instances in which students and teachers see methodology as a closed prescription rather than an encouragement to look for further possibilities'.

The eight projects described are by pupils aged eleven to eighteen, and are not intended to be prescriptions to be copied elsewhere, but to provide an insight into what can be achieved by a design project, when it is planned and guided with specific educational objectives in mind. Each of the contributors precedes the description of his particular project by a short statement outlining his objectives in undertaking design education, and the particular project he describes. All the eight projects involve social and environmental considerations, but are otherwise very different. Each provides appropriate illustrative material to support the statement, and this material gives a clear idea of the work undertaken and of the involvement of the pupils concerned. The cumulative effect of the eight contributions is to set a scene and to indicate the different directions in which design education can proceed most effectively. In my opinion, it is however a pity that the opportunity to develop the methodology stops short at this point. Further analysis of the relationship between each of the projects, and in particular of the methods of assessment adopted, would be of much value to the hesitant design teacher, for whom, nevertheless, this book offers most useful guidelines.

K. R. BURFORD

Art in junior education
Department of Education and Science
HMSO £1·95
The nine schools whose work is shown and described in this charming and richly illustrated booklet, although differing in size and geographical location, have two important features in common – they are led by head teachers who care deeply about the visual and tactile education of their pupils, and contain teachers who – apart from other professional skills – possess a high level of aesthetic sensitivity, whether technically proficient themselves or not.

It is obvious that both groups view art not as an esoteric, decorative activity separate from the main business of learning, but as a fundamentally important tool of learning, strongly supportive of development in other main areas of the curriculum. In these schools, however, concern for aesthetic quality in the art works produced has not been sacrificed to collaboration. Much of the work illustrated is very sophisticated for the age-range concerned, in terms of the aesthetic judgements and skills demanded.

Perhaps inevitably, in reduced reproduction, some of the work seems 'tight', but this is balanced by the obvious exuberance of such work as that of School Five, the 'inner-city school surrounded by decaying and vandalized housing'.

It seems clear that HMI, who selected these schools, had one other main criterion in mind – throughout the booklet the desirability of children working even at this early stage from direct personal observation is stressed again and again. I believe this emphasis to be justified, and to be crucial to curriculum development in this difficult but absorbing field.
ERNEST GOODMAN

Radical education: a critique of free-schooling and deschooling
Robin Barrow
Martin Robertson £7·95 hardback, £3·50 paperback
Teaching is an intellectual exercise: there is a sharp necessity to think about what one is doing. Thus, critical examination of educational theory can be useful to teachers. Certainly no one will be made any the worse at his job by interesting himself in what philosophers have to say. But, as with children, the way they say their piece is what seems most to govern the attention given to it. Clarity of expression, freshness of outlook, a capacity to introduce telling anecdotes and bright persuasive metaphors are all important in attaining a hold on large numbers.

Orphean charmers are rare in the literature of education, but Rousseau, with whom Dr Barrow begins, is certainly one of them, and A. S. Neill would be numbered among them by many. The object of this book is to break their spell. Dr Barrow pulls us gently by the sleeve, and, with calm good humour, endeavours to restore our critical faculties. There are those who feel, his introduction tells us, that provided we are 'stimulated, excited, amazed or otherwise alerted', then we have to yield to the blandishments of their arguments and enshrine them as our *gurus*. Better, he claims, that we should observe the incoherence of their argument, the overstatements, the false analogies, the sweeping generalizations, the unsupported assertions. His book supplies impressive assistance in this task.

Of course Rousseau towers above the other 'members of this selected team of radicals'. There are points of comparison between him and A. S. Neill, but is it really essential to pull in a group of contemporary Americans, for the sake of trying to dispel the modish glamour they have somehow acquired? Hindsight enables us to see that *Emile* became, in due course (it took a long time), one of the greatest formative influences on the manner that teachers have adopted towards their pupils. Goodman and Illich have had interesting things to say about the operation of schools in contemporary society, but can anyone suppose that they have done more than stir a ripple of attention? As to Neill, his concern is not Rousseau's – how to teach – but something quite different – how to run a therapeutic community for the disturbed children of the middle class.

Dr Barrow first records, in turn, the main doctrines of his radicals, and then tries to extract the common elements in their writing. All are in revolt against various assumptions and beliefs of their age, for which social, economic and political factors are held responsible. Educators must share with everyone else the moral duty to transform society, but they have, at the same time, to discharge the special duty of shielding the young from its polluting influence. A radical outlook on education is also defined by opinions on the psychology of children and

the philosophy of knowledge. It reflects the belief that children have an innate tendency to be good, and are bad only as a result of receiving moral instruction; that they want knowledge, but can obtain it only on their own terms. Most definitively of all, that the area within which a person should be left to do what he wants to do, ought to be expanding and not contracting. From this standpoint, Illich and Goodman launch a powerful condemnation of the industrialized, consumer-conscious world. They believe that schools act as agents of the powers of darkness. Goodman would tolerate one-teacher schools for children up to the age of twelve, but at that point all formal institutions of education or training would apparently be outlawed. Illich wants educational resources to be placed directly into the hands of the consumer, and advocates the general issue of vouchers, or to use his own term, though it may be equally distasteful on this side of the Atlantic, 'edu-credit cards'. On this question, Dr Barrow – I think for the one and only time in his book – somewhat loses his cool.

It is perhaps worth noting that Illich is not the first 'de-schooler' any more than Goodman was the first to propose the 'mini-school.' D. H. Lawrence, prophet and teacher, wrote, 'No child should be sent to any sort of public institution before the age of ten years . . . this notice should be sent through the length and breadth of the land. From the first day of the coming year, all schools will be closed for an indefinite period. Fathers see that your boys are trained to be men. Mothers, see that your daughters are trained to be women. All schools will shortly be converted either into public workshops or into gymnasia . . .'

Dr Barrow's critique deserves a warm welcome, not least from those who are moved to murmur, 'Long live the radical tradition!'

DAVID HOPKINSON

Teaching spelling

Mike Torbe

Ward Lock Education £1·10 paperback

There are few topics that polarize attitudes more rigidly than spelling. Mike Torbe has produced a small book that helpfully avoids confirming the prejudices of either side.

He has combined the evidence of recent research, particularly that of Dr Margaret Peters, with both traditional wisdom and good current practice. The result is a small book that should be particularly valuable for students and young teachers, but which many others with longer experience could usefully study.

Some parts of the book could be accused of superficiality. For example, it summarizes the main reasons for not being able to spell as 'weak visual memory' and 'weak auditory analysis'. Others might wish to elaborate on the cognitive and emotional components of spelling failure, as well as stressing the physical problems. Mike Torbe has chosen to simplify the issues, but, through his bibliography, to point potential readers towards more detailed studies.

His strength is in the succinct and pragmatic way that he has summarized and ordered the main problems, explored and explained practical solutions, and provided help with teaching ideas and methods of testing and recording. Throughout the book he emphasizes the importance of giving pupils the strategies to help themselves. Whether through 'proof reading' their own work, or 'always asking them to have a go first', he aptly observes that 'the teaching job is not to correct mistakes the pupil has already made, but to help him not to make that mistake next time'.

There are short sections on 'Doing corrections' and 'Teaching ideas and games'. In both, it is clear that the suggestions spring from practical experience rather than theory. It is this pragmatic standpoint that will commend this useful classroom manual to the practising teacher. Close attention to the suggestions and recommendations that it makes would bring both order and clarification to an area of the curriculum that is either bedevilled with prejudice or neglected through complacency.

GORDON MACKAY

The managerial approach to tertiary education: a critical analysis (Studies in Education 7)

Bernard Baron

University of London, Institute of Education £2·95 paperback

The reader who is intimidated by management theory may well enjoy this book, which is modest in length and in tone. Even those familiar with 'MbO' (management by objectives) will find much to approve. The book is

a revised version of the author's earlier MA dissertation, and this possibly accounts for its rather high level of generalization. It is a pity it does not include one or two case studies of how colleges are actually coping with MbO, particularly when faced with the demands of TEC, BEC, ITBs, MSC, unemployment, and the increasing momentum of 16–19 educational need.

Nevertheless, this book has some sensible things to say about the management of colleges in the further education sector, in the broadest sense, even if it completely fails to acknowledge the tertiary *college* and *its* managerial problems. The final chapter, in particular, contains the material for many a future dissertation – or, better still, some really practical studies in tertiary educational management. It is unreasonable, says the author, 'to fail to consider what outcomes are being produced for the great expenditure of resources entailed . . .'. Even if there is no *one* best way of achieving the desired results in education, 'an educator should not be excused from an evaluation of his performance, but the problems lie in determining who should set the objectives and conduct the evaluation.' Let us hope then for some future publications to tell us *how* these problems are being tackled in actual practice, and with what degree of measurable success.
KENNETH HASTINGS

Cause for concern

Working Party of the Black People's Progressive Association and Redbridge Community Relations Council

Black People's Progressive Association/ Redbridge Community Relations Council £0·20 paperback

This document is remarkable on a number of counts. Not least because it is the product of a working party consisting of active community groups, known to be critical of existing local educational provision in relation to the academic achievements of pupils of West Indian parentage, but who, nevertheless, gained considerable support and cooperation in confirming their opinions from the borough's education department.

The report uses statistics based on verbal reasoning tests, English and mathematics to show the relative performance of pupils from different ethnic groups in the fourth year of eight junior schools. It also details the relative position of the pupils of West Indian background within academic sets, and their attainments in examinations at one secondary school.

The picture presented by the statistics is not surprising, and matches the feelings that many educational observers have but cannot quantify. It is extremely depressing because of the extent of underachievement shown.

A similar picture emerges in attainments in secondary school subjects. What the figures do not show, but which adds to the concerns being expressed in the report, is that the 'white indigenous' pupils are from the poorer areas of the borough, where performance is generally depressed.

The paper goes on to discuss possible explanations for such marked differences, including social class, cultural differences, self image, teacher attitudes, dialect interference and innate intelligence differences between groups. Apart from innate differences in IQ between groups, which are discussed in detail and discounted, all the other factors are said to have some influence. The remedies suggested include specialist resources, curriculum development, in-service training, pre-school provision and the support of self-help groups. There are times in this section when reference to unnamed experts and 'feelings' takes precedence over evidence, and this is slightly irritating, although it is understandable when what is intended is a short, punchy paper rather than an academic text.

The real importance of this work seems to lie in two main areas. First, the processes which brought it into being – parents, teachers, the local authority and community groups – were all involved in examining an important educational issue. Secondly, the production of detailed information about the actual performance in schools of some minority groups – an issue that has often been avoided by groups such as those involved in producing this document.

While the analysis of causes, the conclusions and the recommendations in such a report will inevitably vary, depending on local circumstances, there would be great value in this type of activity being taken up in other multiracial areas, in the context of the present government's intention to monitor the relative achievements of ethnic minority groups in education.
P. SINGH

The third R: towards a numerate society
J. A. Glenn (editor)
Harper and Row £4·95 hardback, £1·95 paperback
The lack of constructive discussion about the meaning of numeracy, in relation to present day social, commercial and industrial conditions, has been the cause of much confusion. This book, produced by the Mathematical Education Section of NATFHE, provides a valuable assessment of what are considered to be the basic and essential skills in number an adult needs. The authors have carefully pruned existing arithmetic syllabuses of those topics which they feel are mainly there because of tradition, or in order to fulfil some later requirement from which only a small minority of pupils would benefit. Given the foundation the book describes, the employer is then seen as bearing some responsibility for further training in specific skills. The editor also includes a useful list of behavioural objectives, which go a considerable way towards clarifying what all pupils should at least be able to do by the time they leave school.

It is accepted that numeracy implies an appreciation of how numbers are constructed, and an understanding of how the methods of computation work. To exceed the pupil's powers of comprehension is seen as unproductive in the long term. The need to build on practical experiences is constantly emphasized, yet it would have been particularly helpful to teachers of older pupils, if there had been more illustration of how arithmetic is applied. Without an abundant supply of contemporary applications to provide motivation and a sense of purpose, there is the risk that a diet of basic arithmetic could be a very dull affair. Although there are references to the electronic calculator, and its appropriateness for handling detailed calculation, there is a tendency to underplay the consequences that this machine could have on exploring the behaviour of numbers, and changing the emphasis on our techniques of computation.
E. L. SEWELL

The self-respecting child: a study of children's play and development
Alison Stallibrass
Thames and Hudson £1·25 paperback
Mrs Stallibrass brings to this book her experience of providing for children's play needs at the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham in the late '30s, and of being a mother of five children, running a pre-school playgroup in her own home for fourteen years. Her detailed observation of children's play, and of ways in which they respond to each other by action or words, provides sufficient support to the author's argument that play is as vital as any other nourishment to children's growth and development. In addition, this book has much sound advice on practical matters of providing for children's play, and should therefore be very useful for the intended readership of 'the parents and those people interested in the possibility of increasing the happiness and wisdom of future generations'.

Piaget's writings have had considerable influence on the author. Some of his observations of his own children are included in this book. In consequence, much emphasis is given in Mrs Stallibrass' 'free-choice playgroup' to the social factor contributing towards maturation, but relatively little account is taken of children's interest in the physical world. The investigation and discovery of this through play is an aspect contributing to the child's whole development, which, by appropriate intervention, is fostered by the teacher of young children. For this reason, I find it difficult to accept the suggestion in the author's note 'for "playgroup" read "playgroup or nursery school" '.
I. PERLMUTTER

Knuckle sandwich: growing up in the working-class city
David Robins and Philip Cohen
Penguin £1·00 paperback
One of the problems in teaching disadvantaged children in schools is how to start from their existing learning and living situations – since there is no other point at which to start – without compromising the cultural position of the teacher, and without placing in jeopardy the progress of the children along the lines which others have set for them. Unless one can approach children on something like their own terms, one cannot communicate with them. It is in the creative tension of combining a respect for the existing situation with a determination to open new doors for young people – and even to lead them through – that the educational process must occur.

That the same process operates with

youth and community workers is amply demonstrated in this book. They, of course, encounter the added problems of young people who are facing the relatively uncontrollable influences of the working (or, for some of them, non-working) world, rather than the more predictable life of the school.

This disturbing book is about the rise and fall, between 1972 and 1974, of an unofficial community project, known as the Black Horse Disco, which started in a redundant pub in a North London housing estate. The creation of the estate appears to have been a recipe for problems – most families were brought in from all over London, while others were re-housed from another part of the borough. The authors worked on the Black Horse Disco project, and subsequently conducted a research project into working-class youth cultures, though that is not the subject of the present book.

Knuckle Sandwich is a disturbing book, because as it impressively chronicles the complexity of the forces at work in such a situation, one is overtaken by a growing feeling of helplessness. Indeed, the authors are somewhat unconvincing in their suggestions for further action. They see a need for 'new strategies of social education which can actually *reach* the kids', an 'educational process which remains rooted in the peer group uses of language and literacy . . .'. They conceive this as a process in which 'young people move from being simple narrators, to become the teachers, and finally the spokesmen of their peers.' They argue for an educational group 'detached teaching' method, but they see it as 'better suited to the "born teacher," who has never been near a training college in his life, but who feels at home in the cultural colorations of the environment, than to the paid qualified professional'. As a palliative this may be helpful; as a main-line policy approach it appears to be a recipe for chaos.

Whatever expedients are required to help present teenagers in the inner city to face and cope with their problems, from the point of view of public policy perhaps it would also be profitable to look at the task of the inner-city school, and to study the nature of the effects it can have on its less successful young people. From this we may consider whether by changes in approaches, in methods, and above all in attitudes, the schools can draw increased strength from their local communities, and so help to avoid alienating young people. There are factors outside the school which are crucial of course, for example the amount and type of employment available for young people in the inner city.

This book should be read by all who are concerned about children growing up in these conditions, and especially by those whose job it is to formulate policies for the inner cities for the next decade.

CHRISTOPHER A. NORMAN

Implementing individualized learning in schools and colleges (Guidelines 4)
W. J. K. Davies
Council for Educational Technology £6·50

This book is a valuable guide to an important but as yet under-utilized area of educational technology which can significantly improve pupil, student and teacher performance. It claims to concentrate on broadening teaching and learning activities and relationships, as well as on the acquisition and development of new learning skills. One of its main aims is to encourage students to examine, in depth, how they may raise their own aspirations, and how – through the use of various resources – achieve them.

There is an orderly sequence on planning and implementation which, if adhered to, can only improve the efficiency of teacher and taught. Examples are quoted of objections raised by teachers, and strategies adopted to allay their apprehension. There are also references to the 'acres of slavish copying from encyclopedias that decorate many school walls in the name of finding out', and the repetition of worksheets that really teach only tricks of answering and not understanding. These serve as a background to the suggested ways in which individual educational performance may be improved.

Of the 260 pages in the book, about half advise on how work and physical resources should be organized and individual work materials designed. The appendices include a comprehensive reference and index section, also many examples of work suitable for infants and upwards.

Those responsible for initial and in-service teacher training will find the book particularly valuable. It can also be regarded as a handbook on individualized learning for all serving teachers, who would do well to ponder the questions set by the author.

J. E. B. DAWSON

Standards and the school curriculum: analysis and suggestions from HM Inspectorate

David Hopkinson (editor)

Ward Lock £2·50 paperback

The title of this book raises expectations which its contents do not satisfy. The accompanying publisher's blurb promises the reader 'a long cool look at developments which are still insufficiently understood . . . evidence of new thinking about standards in subjects of vital importance to modern society, as well as advice on how to achieve them and also how to measure achievement . . . fresh and highly stimulating opinions'. 'Much of the value of this book', it is claimed, 'lies in its topicality'.

In fact, the book contains a collection of fifteen articles originally published in *Trends in Education* during the first five years of the present decade, contributed (with the exception of Harry Judge) by those who were serving as Staff Inspectors at the time of writing. These articles are loosely grouped together under two rather odd headings: 'Old subjects reassessed' and 'The architecture of the curriculum'. Some of them (for example, 'Workshop crafts' and 'The impact of science teaching projects on secondary education') have little obvious contribution to make to the debate on educational standards. All are very brief, the longest having nine pages, the shortest only two and a half: not so much a 'long cool look', more a series of fleeting glances.

The introduction to the collection states that 'in some instances rearrangements and slight revisions have been made to incorporate new information', but these adjustments have not been sufficiently far-reaching to prevent the volume from having a quaintly dated air. With a certain nostalgia one reads Harry Judge's plea that 'the notion of assessment . . . should no longer be resisted' and that 'assessment of standards . . . should become a central theme of the educational debate'. In a similar vein, we find Brian Kay advancing 'a number of tentative hypotheses' about the conditions under which an assessment of the whole curriculum might be carried out, together with 'some preliminary thoughts' about possible ways in which the task of national monitoring might be approached. Here also we have Trevor Fletcher predicting that concern over standards of basic computation 'may lead to a demand for some form of monitoring of the standards of mathematical competence being achieved in schools' and Robert Lyness putting forward a plea for a 'not too ambitious' programme of assessment of performance in mathematics. All this in a book published at a time when the first national primary mathematics survey mounted by the DES Assessment of Performance Unit had already taken place. The 'topicality' of the book lies largely in its title.

Although I would not wish to suggest that none of these articles is worth re-reading, I would seriously question whether they warrant reprinting in a less ephemeral form than that for which they were originally intended.

CLARE BURSTALL

Controversial issues in child development

Doria Pilling and Mia Kellmer Pringle

Elek £8·95 hardback

This book is a review of the literature on five issues in child development – the impact of very early life experiences on development; shared care; the father's role in the family; teachers' expectations and pupil performance; and disadvantage and intervention. The venture was sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Security, and the issues were chosen by the authors, not only because they are the subjects of controversy, but also because of their relation with such major aspects of contemporary life as the parental role and women's liberation, the role of education and the problems of disadvantage.

In her introductory section, Dr Kellmer Pringle discusses each of the major themes within its contemporary social and political setting. She clearly feels that the provision of more financial resources to support child-rearing is a prerequisite of progress. She refers to 'an agreed, statutorily prescribed minimum income available to all families who need one', and to 'adequate financial support for child-rearing'. In a world in which worthy ends are competing for scarce means it is, perhaps oversimple to say that, 'the low priority given to children by society is reflected in both the low level of benefits and the failure to link them to the cost of living'. After a short account of the role of education in enhancing life chances, and a warning against unrealistically high expectations of what the schools can achieve, Dr Pringle goes on to discuss educational disadvantage. Few would quarrel with her conclusions –

that it would be profitable to attempt to discover which factors enable some children, but not others, to overcome severe disadvantage, and then to apply this knowledge to all children at risk, acting on the assumption that early intervention will be economically justifiable.

Each of the five issues is the subject of a general discussion by Doria Pilling, and her conclusions in each case are both balanced and illuminating. She has compiled for each of the issues annotations of the relevant researches, and these will be of great value to those who seek guidance for further study. For educationists, the discussion on teachers' expectations and pupil performance is of particular interest. The author concludes that the extent to which teachers' expectations will affect pupil performance in the classroom is as yet unclear, but there is little doubt that they do have an influence. She feels that in some cases 'teachers may still be inadvertently widening the gap between children', and advocates studies on teachers' classroom behaviour as possibly a particularly fruitful line of research. Although this section of the book covers about 380 pages, it is really a miracle of compression, and the conclusions are clearly drawn.

The book will be helpful both to teachers and to members of the social services. It must surely be an essential work of reference for all who are concerned with the making of social and educational policy.

CHRISTOPHER A. NORMAN

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